THEOCRITUS AT COURT

BY

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ABBREVIATED REFERENCES

The abbreviations used in this study are generally those of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, with the exception of periodicals, for which I follow the system proposed in the *American Journal of Archaeology* 74 (1970) 3-8. The following works will be cited in abbreviated form:

Cerfaux-Tondriau	L. Cerfaux and J. Tondriau, *Un Concurrent du Christianisme: le culte des souverains dans la civilisation gréco-romaine* (Bibliothèque de théologie, ser. III 5; Tournai 1957).
Fraser	P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (3 vols., Oxford 1972).
Gow	*Theocritus*[2], edited with a translation and commentary by A. S. F. Gow (2 vols., Cambridge 1952; reprinted 1965).
Horstmann	A. Horstmann, *Ironie und Humor bei Theokrit* (Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 67; Meisenheim am Glan 1976).
Legrand	Ph.-E. Legrand, *Étude sur Théocrite* (Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 79; Paris 1898; reprinted 1968).
Meincke	W. Meincke, *Untersuchungen zu den enkomiastischen Gedichten Theokrits* (diss. Kiel 1965).
Pfeiffer	*Callimachus*, edited by R. Pfeiffer (Oxford, vol. 1 1949; vol. 2 1953).
Visser	E. Visser, *Götter und Kulte im ptolemäischen Alexandrien* (Allard Pierson Stichting, Archaeologisch-historische Bijdragen 5; Amsterdam 1938).
Wilam., *Textg.*	U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Die Textgeschichte der griechischen Bukoliker* (Philologische Untersuchungen 18; Berlin 1906).
Wilam., *H. D.*	——, *Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Kallimachos* (2 vols., Berlin 1924).

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM OF AN AUDIENCE

It was in Ptolemaic Alexandria that poets first learned to espouse the virtues of purity, perhaps because they were losing the occasions for candor. In earlier generations their predecessors had not blushed to claim a measure of revealed truth and of temporal power. Pindar and Bacchylides saw themselves as eagles. Callimachus, however, aspired only to sing like the cicada: "Let another bray like the long-eared beast, but let me be the delicate, the winged one. Oh, yes! that I may sing feeding on dewdrops, free nourishment from the divine air" (fr. 1.31-34 Pf.). His braying rivals may have grated on the ear quite as much as had Pindar's chattering crows, but in characterizing himself Callimachus did not presume to strength or impact in quite the same way. Where in the fifth century the community and certain large religious forces could find their voice in poets like Pindar and the Attic dramatists, Alexandrian [1] men of letters preferred to skirt claims to public status or to gifts of vision beyond dazzling powers of documentation: ἀμάρτυρον οὐδὲν ἀείδω (Callim. fr. 612 Pf.). The Ptolemies, in becoming their own priests and also their own gods, had circumvented the poet's prophetic function. What for Hesiod on Helicon had been an initiation into a terrifying and useful power became for Callimachus in the *Aetia* more like a long and interesting dream. The Muses were with him still, but, having traded awesomeness for much learning, more as librarians than as goddesses. And as "unacknowledged legislator" the poet had no real purpose in a regime where the political will of the *demos* officially mattered no longer. He spoke only for himself, for art, and for the rather superior values of the classical tradition. While the eagle is more intimidating than musical, the song of the cicada seems to come from nowhere—not a rich harmony, but, like Tithonus withering into immortality, one that endures. Theocritus chimed in that poets who forget their γνῶθι σαυτόν disgrace themselves like frogs vying with grasshoppers (*Id.* 7.41).[2]

[1] Hereafter I shall restrict the adjective "Alexandrian" to poets actually writing in Alexandria.

[2] For general studies of the role of poetry in Alexandria, see Wilam.,

However, the hermetic isolation of the first disciples of *ars gratia artis* inevitably looked less noble to some in the outside world. The Sillographer Timon of Phlius dismissed the *poetae docti* of Ptolemy's palace of learning, the Museum, as follows: "Many are feeding in populous Egypt, scribblers on papyrus, ceaselessly wrangling in the bird-cage of the Muses" (Ath. 22d).[3] The poets' constant claims of aesthetic self-sufficiency and detachment from the historical moment might be read as a cover for actual parasitism. Yet both the poets and their detractors agreed that intellectuals were and should be kept at a safe distance from public life: σικχαίνω πάντα τὰ δημόσια (Callim. *Ep.* 28.4 Pf.).

Such isolation should facilitate the job of the modern interpreter, who may then assume that these poems were written in libraries to stay there and composed by scholars for people like ourselves, that is, for an audience whose cultural limitations and political motives need hardly have concerned the poet as he advanced the cause of art. The question of the relationship of the poet to an audience other than scholars and poets—a vexing, but crucial issue in the study of epic, drama, and choral lyric—rarely plays a role in the interpretation of Alexandrian writers. It was, in fact, they—Callimachus most of all—who first suggested that it should not.

Clearly the public voice of poetry was much attenuated, but are we safe in assuming that it had vanished altogether? In recent scholarship I note one gentle demur, that of Pfeiffer,[4] who resists the notion that the Museum quite deserves comparison with Flaubert's "Tour d'ivoire." Callimachus, he notes, spoke of his attachment to his native Cyrene and to the new Ptolemaic ruler-worship; Philetas and his successors, for their part, faced the vagaries of politics as heads of the Library and tutors to the heirs to the throne. Curiously, Pfeiffer does not mention the poet of this circle who leaves us the greatest amount of courtly verse: Theocritus, who wrote four poems in praise of the Ptolemies (*Idd.* 14, 15, 17,

H.D. I, esp. 152 ff.; Ph.-E. Legrand, *La Poésie alexandrine* (Paris 1924) 9-46; H. Herter, "Hellenismus und Hellenentum," in *Das neue Bild der Antike* I, ed. H. Berve (Leipzig 1942) 334-53; B. Snell, *Poetry and Society in Ancient Greece* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1961) 91 ff.; and Fraser I, esp. 305 ff. and 717 ff.

[3] Translation by R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford 1968; reprinted 1971) 97.

[4] "The Future of Studies in the Field of Hellenistic Poetry," *JHS* 75 (1955) 73 = *Ausgewählte Schriften*, ed. W. Bühler (Munich 1960) 158; and again *History* 98.

and the fragmentary *Berenice*), apparently nods to them in a fifth (*Id.* 7.93), and may, it has been suspected, be allegorizing them in another three (*Idd.* 18, 24, and 26). To be sure, Theocritus the pastoralist, whom over the past four decades interpreters have increasingly assumed to be the only Theocritus, seems not quite a full-fledged member of the "bird-cage." P. M. Fraser in his admirable account of Ptolemaic patronage mentions Theocritus only to dismiss him as not "an Alexandrian poet in the strict sense" (I.309). Having gone to the trouble of inventing in the pastoral the fiction of a world without history, how closely bound can he feel to his own time or place? Yet he is linked to both Callimachus and Apollonius Rhodius by a network of echoes, borrowings, and parodies which are on the whole denser than that which links the other two. He wrote more lines for monarchs, it seems, than about herdsmen, though these are related phenomena, as we are reminded by princes ranging from Caesar, who enters Virgil's heaven as Daphnis (*Ecl.* 5), to Marie Antoinette *en pastourelle.* Theocritus himself allows that his own road to the country, as "Simichidas" in the *Thalysia,* passes beneath the throne of Zeus, that is, of Ptolemy. He is not just the εὑρετής of the pastoral, but of the pastoral encomium as well in his tribute to Hiero II of Syracuse (*Id.* 16). There may, therefore, be a side of the poet—and a force at the Ptolemaic court—which has never been systematically studied.

There have been reasons for not pursuing the question. To label poetry as "courtly" invites its dismissal as serious art, though the ancients accepted the realities of patronage without embarrassment and would surely be amused by the modern confidence that a network of universities, educational foundations, and cultural ministries shelters art more honorably than might a monarch with taste and flair. Let us also keep in mind that even in the unsullied world of the pastorals the first business which we see (in *Id.* 1) is a patron's request and reward for a performance. Thyrsis has not even arrived at his concluding χαίρετε . . . Μοῖσαι before he demands his pay. Have we inflicted purities on Theocritus such as he never claimed for himself?

But the prejudice that it is demeaning to sing for princes does less damage than the assumption that it is simple to do so: a nod here, a compliment there, a bit of transparent mythological allegory. Such gestures quite reasonably excite little interest. But the Ptolemies, who occasionally put poets to death, posed novel

problems of etiquette: How did one address the living man, but future god? The newly-wed siblings? The Macedonian pharaoh, who was the great patron of Hellenism? The classical tradition which he had caused to flourish again at his doorstep bequeathed to the poet no rhetorical maneuvers for handling such delicate occasions, but only the strong injunction to admonish, denounce, and avoid people like the Ptolemies who killed their brothers, married their sisters, tyrannized fellow Greeks, assaulted Olympus, and on the whole lowered the tone of civic life. The rhetoric of the courtly poems turns out to be far from simple, as we shall see. More importantly, the monarchs had not just vanities to be indulged, but their own poetic tastes. Philadelphus grew up under the tutelage of Philetas and Zenodotus, then hired Eratosthenes for his own son. Surely he did not patronize poetry so lavishly because he was deaf to it. Might not he and Arsinoe at times want to hear about something other than themselves, and therefore encourage, suggest, or inspire something other than encomium? Having hedged about their own ascent to Olympus with new divine ancestors (Zeus, Heracles) and partners in cult (Aphrodite, Dionysus), they inevitably influenced the way that their poets used or avoided these gods. The Ptolemies, having promoted Homeric studies so lavishly, could hardly greet with simple indifference the way that their own stable of poets emulated the master or renounced the attempt. Our evidence, ranging from the master plan of Alexandria itself down to the meanest oenochoae,[6] indicates that the Ptolemaic involvement in cultural politics was massive and meticulous. We must reckon, therefore, with the possibility that their presence in poetry extends well beyond the occasional eulogy. As a discriminating and perverse audience they may have shaped much of the tone and outlook of the poetry which they caused to be written. It is not for nothing that the majority of the marriages mentioned in the *Idylls* are incestuous. If we listen only for the tones of overt panegyric, we will miss much of what the patrons might have found gratifying in the mythological poems.

Our estimation of Theocritus will hardly be diminished by a broader view of his attachment to the court. To be sure, more of the *Idylls* may be directed to royal vanities than has been realized. But, given the times, there may be no better place to see the generative

[6] On which, see D. B. Thompson, *Ptolemaic Oinochoai and Portraits in Faience* (Oxford 1973).

principles of the new society. For what was the city of Alexandria but the vanity of the Ptolemies writ large? They did not rule Egypt; they owned it and set up its streets, temples, cities, and nomes as their shrine. As the Ptolemies form the life of this society around a new religion and a new mythology with themselves at the center, the poet who validates their status in myth does himself have a role of public consequence. To put the old myths and phrases of Homer and Hesiod in service to the new pharaohs may seem an act of literary betrayal. Yet the poet's skill in doing so must surely influence how gracefully and respectfully the living gods turn aside from traditional Greek values, for the classical poetry might otherwise be taken to stand as a reproach to the new tyrants and their scandalous behavior. The more they conceived of themselves in traditional Greek terms, however undeservedly, the less vigorously they might pursue a policy of Egyptianization which clearly appalled Callimachus and Theocritus. In one part of the royal compound poets were addressing myth as if it were comfortably dead and therefore ripe to be catalogued, burlesqued, and obfuscated. Yet only a few steps away the Ptolemies' self-interested tampering with Olympus marked a new, if limited generative stage of myth, which responded to and created profound changes in private belief and public life. While some gods, like Callimachus' infant Artemis (*Dian.*) were fading into preciosity, others were being born: Sarapis, the Hellenized Isis, the very popular Arsinoe Philadelphus. The attachment of old gods like Zeus, Heracles, and Dionysus in their traditional literary form to the new cults was to show the way to the Romans when they themselves came to spawn new gods and invent the myth of their own history. In all, the laureates of the new Ptolemaic mythology, as I shall argue Theocritus to be, assumed in the life of the society a far from trivial role, which we must see as more than a minor and unwelcome aspect of the *Idylls*.

What he produced at court, including two acknowledged masterpieces (*The Charites* and *The Adoniazusae*) offers an inside view not only of the history of the time, but of the factors that shaped Alexandrian poetic practice. The narrow and untrodden path of refinement may be easiest to trace from those places where it must intersect the broad Ptolemaic thoroughfares, that is, where the poet must use his bag of tricks to accommodate an audience with prejudices, tastes, and political motives different from his own.

A central tenet of Callimachean poetics, for instance, is the scorn for the ζῆλος Ὁμηρικός, that is, for the foolhardy attempt to beat Homer at his own game. Theocritus apparently concurs (*Id.* 7.45-48), and I do not for a moment doubt the sincerity of either poet in declining to attempt the μέγα βιβλίον. Perfectionists such as they clearly could not go the distance. But why flog those foolish enough to try? And why scramble under the shadow of Hesiod as an equally venerable, but more imitable father of ἔπος? Earlier poets had conceded the unchallengeable supremacy of Homer without the slightest defensiveness. Aeschylus, as we often hear, was content that his tragedies be known as "scraps from Homer's banquet" (Ath. 347e). The vigor of Callimachus' and Theocritus' renunciation of heroic poetry may well derive from that part of their audience who would in fact relish hearing of the βασιλῆας and ἥρωας (fr. 1.3 and 5 Pf.): namely, the royal patrons. Callimachus insists that it is his wicked, wicked critics who tax him for declining such heroics; but when Virgil adapts the lines in his own *recusatio* of "reges et proelia" in the *Eclogues* (6.3), he drops the fiction of the third parties and apologizes directly to Varus, the man whom his bucolics cheat of heroic *laudes*. Is it coincidence, then, that in the *Thalysia* Theocritus makes the *apologia* for his non-heroic poetry within earshot of Ptolemy? The many attractive affirmations of poetic delicacy which open the *Aetia* all serve to counterpoise the single statement, "I do not sing of kings." The similar refusal of monumental poetry at the end of the *Hymn to Apollo* follows Callimachus' apparent defense of the Ptolemaic claims on Cyrene. Indeed, Callimachus does not here defend his poetics without first proclaiming his loyalty to Ptolemy (vv. 26 f.), who is to some measure to be identified with the Apollo who steps in to defend the poet from his critics. The audience for such self-justification is, therefore, regularly as heroic as the poetry is not. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, the Ptolemies worshipped Homer no less zealously than did other Hellenistic princes. Their appearances in the *Idylls* are steadily and by no means facetiously attended by evocations of Achilles and Helen, Troy and Ithaca. Similarly, the marshalling of Homerisms in the *Encomium of Ptolemy* serves an obvious purpose. When the poets of Alexandria weigh Homer and Hesiod in the balance, then, they do so before a directly interested audience. The motives behind their verse cannot, therefore, be as purely aesthetic as they are claimed to be. They are, in fact, more interesting than that.

In a number of other ways the study of royal influence promises a new insight into Alexandrian poetics, a subject which remains very nearly where Callimachus left it in proclaiming poetic form an end in itself. The straight Hesiodic road to Dike has now become the high and difficult path of refinement leading nowhere in particular, but shunning everything common (fr. 1.25-28 Pf.).[6] To be sure, the hallmarks of this poetry are exactly what Callimachus prescribed: erudition, well-documented originality, and above all λεπτότης—that is, refinement, brevity, elegance, modesty.[7] But a consideration of the courtly context of much of this poetry will reveal that at other moments stylistic wizardry constitutes not just transcendence of the historical moment, but an astute adaptation to it. Consider, for example, the principle of ποικιλία (*variatio*, variegation): studied heterogeneity, surprising juxtapositions, "expect the unexpected." [8] In most cases this penchant reduces poetry to an elegant and innocuous game: the cultivated reader supplies the expectations which are then evaded, a knowledge of the myths which the poet then proceeds not to tell, and constant delight in the poet's strategies in outwitting such as he. But before the royal audience such elusiveness may have been a matter of personal and artistic survival. Theocritus in his encomium of Hiero sets Achilles and the Odyssean herdsman Eumaeus back to back to achieve a brilliant and startling contrast between the heroic and bucolic, and we can take this as a statement about those genres. But, given the fact that Hiero will doubtless not welcome initiation into the usual Theocritean world of Eumaeus and Daphnis, and that Theocritus cannot or will not sustain his fleeting vision of Hiero as the new Achilles—and would less be acceptable?—the stylistic leaps may provide a means to reconcile what the patron expects with what the poet can provide. Variegation becomes an eminently practical form of rhetorical accommodation. Or when the Alexandrian courtly *Idylls* all evolve into hymns after starting out as something else, the mixture may reflect the fact that only hymns were appropriate finally for

[6] On this image and on Callimachus' poetics in general, see B. Snell, "Art and Play in Callimachus" in *The Discovery of the Mind*, trans. T. Rosenmeyer (Oxford 1953) 264-80.

[7] See especially E. Reitzenstein, "Zur Stiltheorie des Kallimachos," in *Festschrift für Richard Reitzenstein* (Leipzig and Berlin 1931) 25-40; and Pfeiffer, *History* 137 f.

[8] See L. Deubner, "Ein Stilprinzip hellenistischer Dichtkunst," *NJbb* 47 (1921) 361-78.

patrons of self-proclaimed divinity, but that this form pursued exclusively would be poetically ruinous and surely embarrassing for all concerned. The *genus mixtum* may have been an eminently practical way of adapting a new subject matter—the new monarchies—which did not fit comfortably in the inherited categories. We have here a singular opportunity to see how the adroitness and wit, the extraordinary evasiveness, which distinguish these poets were honed in the difficult business of getting their own *tenue* style to serve the mad presumptions of the monarchs and to do so with their captious colleagues looking on. Our estimation of this poetry as an art which flourishes in contradiction can only be enhanced by due consideration of the fact that the poets of the dew-eating cicadas were themselves feeding at the Ptolemaic trough and on occasion crafting timeless verse for the very particular demands of an audience with kings. It is with the question of poetics that I shall begin, looking first to Theocritus' native Syracuse and his address to Hiero II, *The Charites*, which sets the pattern for the courtly verse to follow.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CHARITES AND THE POETICS OF THE *GENUS MIXTUM*

Theocritus' career begins, as far as we can tell, in his native Syracuse, where we first come upon him around 275 B.C. engaged in a futile attempt to resuscitate the *Sicelides Musas* on home territory.[1] He has sent his Charites (poems) canvassing for a patron, he laments, but to no avail. I paraphrase: 'Such is the covetousness of the age that men have no use for poets, though poets bestow the only true immortality. Without Simonides, what would we know of his princely patrons, or even of Odysseus without Homer? Yet it is futile to try to reform the avaricious; farewell to such as they. But that man will have need of me who comes as another Achilles or Ajax—and already the Carthaginians quake as Hiero prepares to drive them from Sicily. All success to him, and may he restore this land to a Golden Age of peace. Then let poets bear his fame to the ends of the world. I, for one, stand ready to be called, always the faithful servant of my Charites (inspiration).' No one had seen verse quite like this before: a single poem that mixes stately Homeric formulae with the language of the streets and evokes in its course Hesiod, Pindar, Bacchylides, folksong, and mime. As the poet rises from despondent mendicancy to the supremely confident congratulation and thanks of his conclusion, he ranges from his shortest periods (vv. 20 f.) to his longest (vv. 25 ff.), from facetious self-depreciation as beggar to proud solemnity as the prophet of the Muses. As Fabiano [2] notes, this splendid *tour de force* "contains in embryo almost all the Theocritean possibilities of theme and of expression." It is, in sum, a model case of the mixing of genres.[3]

Because Theocritus elsewhere speaks about poetry only in the

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[1] On the dating, see Gow II. 305-7 and H. Berve, *König Hieron II.* (AbhBayer, phil.-hist. Kl. n.s. 47; Munich 1959) 8 f. Given the poem's exclusive concern with Syracuse, speculation that it might have been composed elsewhere is hardly material; see R. Petroll, *Die Äusserungen Theokrits über seine Person und seine Dichtung* (diss. Hamburg 1965) 9 f.

[2] "Fluctuation in Theocritus' Style," *GRBS* 12 (1971) 519.

[3] On the mixing of genres, the most useful discussions remain those of

codes and riddles favored in Ptolemaic circles, the straightforwardness of *The Charites* has recommended it to many scholars as a sort of *ars poetica*. Treu,[4] for instance, after deciphering Callimachean *Selbstzeugnisse*, turns to *Id.* 16 with a sigh of relief "dass wenigstens ein Gedicht aus jener Zeit erhalten ist, das uns vor allem ein offenes Bekenntnis eines Dichters zu seiner Kunst bringt." But if what *Id.* 16 offers is candor, let us be grateful that Theocritus was cured of it in Alexandria, for it is a great source of confusion. Survey the profundities culled from *Id.* 16 by various hands, often for promotion to the canons of literary history, and you will find their messages madly contradictory. We are told, variously, that Theocritus here preserves the conventional subservience of the poet to his Muses, hence to received tradition (Meincke 60-62 and 70-73)—or that he proclaims the new freedom of *Buchpoesie* from such dependence;[5] that he perpetuates the old utilitarian view of poetry as purveyor of immortality and of moral instruction[6]—or that he makes the first departure to self-justifying aestheticism, *ars gratia artis*;[7] that he casts his lot with the playfulness and intellectuality of Simonides,[8] whom he names—or that his allegiance lies ultimately and quite contrarily with the noble piety of Pindar,[9] whom he extensively imitates; finally, and most crucially, that

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Legrand, 413-29; L. Deubner, "Ein Stilprinzip hellenistischer Dichtkunst," *NJbb* 47 (1921) 361-78; and W. Kroll, "Die Kreuzung der Gattungen" in *Studien zum Verständnis der römischen Literatur* (Stuttgart 1924; reprinted Darmstadt 1964) 202-24.

4 "Selbstzeugnisse alexandrinischer Dichter (Kallimachos, 13. Iambos; Theokrit XVI)," in *Miscellanea di studi alessandrini in memoria di Augusto Rostagni* (Turin 1963) 284; cf. Horstmann 119.

5 M. Sanchez-Wildberger, *Theokrit-Interpretationen* (diss. Zürich 1955) 10-12.

6 Petroll, *Die Äusserungen Theokrits* 50 f.

7 N. Austin, "Idyll 16: Theocritus and Simonides," *TAPA* 98 (1967) 20.

8 E. Schwartz, "Theokrits Daphnis," *GGA* (1904) 307; E. Bethe, *Die griechische Dichtung* (Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft; Potsdam 1929) 296; R. Merkelbach, "Bettelgedichte (Theokrit, Simonides und Walther von der Vogelweide)", *RhM* n.s. 95 (1952) 312-27; Austin, *loc. cit.* On Theocritus' debt to the lyric poets, see in general A. Szastyńska-Siemion, "Z lirycznych inspiracji Teokryta (idd. XXIV, II, XVI, XVIII)," *Eos* 57 (1965) 59-70.

9 E. Clapp, "Two Pindaric Poems of Theocritus," *CP* 8 (1913) 310-13; G. Perrotta, "Studi di poesia ellenistica," *SIFC* 4 (1925) 5-25; C. von Holzinger, "Theokrit in Orchomenos," *Philologus* 51 (1892) 195. Meincke 79-84. This position is strenuously denied by Treu, *Misc Rostagni* 284.

the poem is a serious petition to Hiero[10]—or that Theocritus despairs midway, then turns to consoling himself[11]—or that he is, in fact, already executing a commission.[12] Each of these positions can be supported from the text. It all depends on which passages we choose to read and believe. For the poem argues itself around in a circle: at the beginning Theocritus does indeed present himself as needy and unappreciated; but by the end, with the mendicant poet now vanished, we hear only the disembodied voice of Poetry itself, beyond any material considerations. The Charites, once humble and humorous symbols of Theocritus' useless scribbling, end the poem as celestial goddesses. Nor should we be surprised if Theocritus conjures up Pindar and Simonides to fight for the attention of the second Hiero as they had for that of the first; one of them, after all, is bound to win. Theocritus has a double and somewhat contradictory goal here: both to petition for patronage and to demonstrate his talents as an encomiast. Given his pragmatic purposes, we must, of course, allow him the right to come down firmly on both sides of every issue. But we are for the same reason obliged at no point to take his aesthetic pronouncements literally. The poem's profundities are all on the surface, props to an argument whose intent is clear.

As a self-interested poetic act, however, *The Charites* demonstrates incomparably more about Theocritus' functioning as a poet than an *ars poetica* might choose to explain. For where else in the *Idylls* can we see so directly how he builds an argument and manipulates an obviously difficult audience? We may discount what he asserts about poetry, but what he assumes as axiomatic and unarguable surely affords a rare view of how that art was regarded at this time, even in a rugged outpost like Syracuse. More importantly, we see for once the linkage of style to circumstance which the Ptolemaic poets conspired to obscure. As I have suggested, it may not be mere virtuosity that moves the poet so rapidly from one theme

[10] The standard view since H. Fritzsche-E. Hiller, *Theokrits Gedichte*[3] (Leipzig 1881) 193; so Legrand 38; Wilam., *Textg.* 154; Gow II. 305; and Sanchez-Wildberger, *Theokrit-Interp.* 9, 11 f., 34 f. This position has been most vigorously defended of late by Merkelbach, *RhM* n.s. 95 (1952) 312-23.

[11] "What sets out to be an encomium of Hiero becomes a *consolatio* of the poet."—Austin, *TAPA* 98 (1967) 18.

[12] So Petroll, *Die Äusserungen Theokrits* 76-84. E. Bignone, *Teocrito* (Bari 1934) 385, raises yet another possibility in terming the poem "un'offerta e un augurio."

and style to another, but the flimsiness of his case. Now, any aspiring warlord should be gratified to hear of a reserve supply of encomiasts. But in this case the timing is unfortunate. An unrecognized poet may have very little indeed to offer and might, in fact, embarrass a fledgling regent like Hiero who has done nothing worth celebrating. But Theocritus has already mastered the sleights of hand possible by posing a question in one genre, say, and answering or evading it in another. A single utterance which sets about to accost, wheedle, reproach, praise, warn, and thank a regent should sound quite lunatic. Yet the various styles that accommodate the various stances actually prevent contradictions from emerging, so that, paradoxically, stylistic variegation lends the address a cohesiveness of tone that its constituent arguments lack. Each of the traditional literary forms has its own ethos, each implies a distinctive relationship between poet and audience. The epic bard remains as staunchly impersonal as the epinician poet may be candid and intimate. The writer of mime must not emerge into his own text any more than may a tragedian, but he does join his audience in a common sense of ironic detachment from the action presented. And the hymn singer can hide behind his gods and address his actual audience only in being overheard. Each mode gives the poet a different sort of voice. Theocritus here will use all of them. Moving briskly from one to another, he not only increases his chances of producing somewhere along the way a tone that a patron might like, but also evades any embarrassing clarity about where he actually claims to stand vis-à-vis that audience. Since Theocritus is not arguing from strength, stylistic agility and evasiveness may be his best defense. In a word, such *variatio* may not only be chic; it may in some circumstances be eminently useful.

Was this a difficult situation rhetorically? We have no evidence that Hiero warmed to the appeal, only that Theocritus left Syracuse shortly thereafter.[13] And it is difficult for a variety of reasons to

[13] See Gow II. 326. The scholia on Ovid, *Ibis* 549 report the apocryphal tale that Theocritus was executed by Hiero for refusing to stop satirizing his son. There may lurk in this tradition some memory of the cultural climate of the Syracusan court. In this connection, it may also be worth nothing that Theocritus twice adapts the story of the Cyclops in love (*Idd.* 6 and 11), which had been created and popularized by Philoxenus of Cythera to satirize Dionysius of Syracuse (Σ Ar. *Plut.* 290 and Ath. 6 f.). Philoxenus' allegory presented Dionysius as Polyphemus, the king's mistress Galatea as her

see how Theocritus could have found the prospects encouraging.

First, Hiero himself was a dismal prospect for a patron. He commissioned stonemasons and shipwrights to memorialize him, but not poets, so far as we know. His great monument was the state ship *Syracusia*, which was mammoth, lavishly outfitted, and usually filled with grain. To the famine-ridden Alexandria of Ptolemy III it carried fifteen hundred bushels, a feat which was immortalized by the Athenian Archimelus, who earned thereby the single commission recorded for the fifty-four years of Hiero's reign (Ath. 209c-e): 'The barge they rode on had a mast rivaling Aetna, a deck broad as an Aegean island, timbers of a strength to span heaven for the Giants, and cables such as could bridge the Hellespont for Xerxes.' Clearly it marked an epoch in famine relief. Archimelus fittingly received as commission a load of grain, at a time when Theocritus had long since found a more astute audience in Alexandria.

We know further that Hiero decked out the officers' quarters of the *Syracusia* with the entire story of the *Iliad* executed in mosaic (Moschion *apud* Ath. 207c-d). But such a taste, typical as it was for Hellenistic princes, could shut the door on an aspirant like Theocritus, who was not a heroic poet or a dead one. "Homer is enough for all," [14] says one of his fictional critics (v. 20), that is, "Why do we need you?" But even the most gifted and obliging encomiast could not convincingly project Hiero back onto the plains of Ilium until the man achieved something. He had distinguished himself in action under Pyrrhus and then stepped into the political vacuum left by his withdrawal.[15] There was no story in that. His triumphs all lay ahead of him, and he was still στρατηγὸς αὐτοκράτωρ, not yet officially king. There could, then, be no hope of praising the institution as well as (or instead of) the man. And lineage? His mother is repeatedly said to have been a slave; if his father was noble at all, he was not prominent enough to impress our ancient sources very much.[16] Hiero was to become the model of the self-

namesake, and himself as Odysseus; Dionysius, for his part, cast Philoxenus into the stone quarries. No political allusions can be recovered from Theocritus' two poems, but one wonders if any reminiscence of the episode would have been considered a friendly act by an heir to Dionysius' throne.

[14] Direct translation here and elsewhere is quoted from Gow I.

[15] See Berve, *König Hieron II*. 7-19.

[16] Paus. 7.8; Zonar. 8.6; Just. 23.4. A. Schenk, Graf von Stauffenberg, *König Hieron der Zweite von Syrakus* (Stuttgart 1933) 2, presents the

made prince. But for the moment he offered the eulogist an abundance of things not to talk about. Nearly all of the standard topics of encomium, epinician ode, and certainly hymn had to be scrapped from the first. When Vahlen[17] dignifies *Id.* 16 with the title "Enkomium der Zukunft," he also indicates the extent to which there was nothing else to talk about. For Theocritus contemplating an approach to Hiero, neither the man nor the moment could have looked too promising.

Second, Theocritus' credentials as euologist scarcely surpassed those of Hiero as hero. The psychology of κλέος is awesomely simple: to attain fame, hire a famous poet. Any reader of epinician odes knows this lesson well.[18] Pindar's victory in song mirrors that of his patrons in sport;[19] both parties are immortalized equally through the poetic relationship. Kings must realize that the claims of the poet to supernatural powers do not fall short of their own.[20] Only a fortunate few will receive the honor of being involved in the poet's international reputation. Pindar goes on in this way not because he is a vain man, but because he is a famous man and because that very fame warrants the efficacy of the celebration that he offers. After all, heroes like Nestor and Sarpedon are just lucky that they found a poet like Homer (*Pyth.* 3.112-14), whose eminence, in fact, may have won Odysseus a bit more fame than he deserves (*Nem.* 7.20-23). In making a visit, a poet like Pindar can quite reasonably claim to bring with him the attention of all of Greece. But if nothing succeeds like success, novices need not apply. Theocritus may at the start of *Id.* 16 jokingly exaggerate the

standard view of Hiero's humble origins. Berve, on the other hand, argues for descent from nobility, possibly prominent, and does not exclude the possibility of a link with the first Hiero.

[17] "Über Theokrits Hieron," in *Gesammelte philologische Schriften* II (Leipzig and Berlin 1923; reprinted Hildesheim and New York 1970) 211.

[18] See in general H. Gundert, *Pindar und sein Dichterberuf* (Frankfurter Studien zur Religion und Kultur der Antike 10; Frankfurt 1935); H. Maehler, *Die Auffassung des Dichterberufs im frühen Griechentum bis zur Zeit Pindars* (Hypomnemata 3; Göttingen 1963) 81-101; and S. Gzella, "Self-Publicity and Polemics in Greek Choral Lyrics," *Eos* 58 (1969/1970) 171-79.

[19] Hence poetry is compared to a chariot (*Ol.* 6.22-27; *Pyth.* 10.65; *Isthm.* 8.61-63); the broad jump (*Nem.* 5.19 f.); as well as javelins and arrows (*Ol.* 1.111 f., 9.11 f., and 13.93-95; *Pyth.* 1.44 f.; and *Nem.* 6.27-29). Both poetry (*Pyth.* 8.34) and the athlete (*Pyth.* 5.114) soar, sometimes together (*Isthm.* 1.64 f.).

[20] J. Duchemin, "Mission sociale et pouvoirs magiques du poète comparés à ceux du roi dans le lyrisme de Pindare," in *La regalità sacra/The Sacred Kingship* (Studies in the History of Religion 4; Leiden 1959).

extent to which he is shut out from these privileged circles.[21] But it would be a pointless joke and insulting to the taste and generosity of current patrons if what he says were not essentially true. We lack evidence of a period of success in Sicily. Very shortly Theocritus would find himself at the court of Ptolemy, and all of his major work seems to follow his emigration. If Theocritus were known for anything, it would be for poems like the *Cyclops* (*Id.* 11), often suspected of being early and Sicilian.[22] This type of witty performance, however, is no recommendation for a candidate to undertake the solemn responsibilities of the poet laureate. Theocritus must, therefore, show himself willing and able to sing *paulo maiora*. But his demonstration of the high style comes in the dispatch of unsolicited samples of his work such as an established encomiast would doubtless never lower himself to send. And despite the embarrassment of his position, Theocritus must also establish that, by the time when Hiero will want his name carried to the ends of the earth, he himself as poet will have the prestige to make it happen. For the moment Theocritus has no support for his case but motherwit and demonstrable talent. If κλέος is the basic currency of the patronage relationship, Theocritus has no stake to start the exchange.

Though poet and patron are unsuited to one another, there may yet be hope precisely because they are so equally unsuited. Here we sense the first real spark of Theocritean genius as he suddenly causes two wrongs to add up to one right. His own lack of success as a poet can serve to take the focus off Hiero's lack of attainment as a leader. There will naturally be some fellow feeling between two talented young men both so overshadowed by their brilliant futures. A larger view of history can reassure them both and suggest, further, that their destinies are to be intertwined. From the poem as a whole we can extract an argument that runs roughly as follows: 'The poet is shut out, not for want of talent, but because these are wicked times. They are wicked because men have turned their backs on the old heroism, as well as on the poetry that celebrated it. But Hiero will change all that; for, when he drives the Carthaginians into the sea and restores Syracuse to its former glory, that glory

[21] Horstmann (120 f.) surveys opinions on this matter.
[22] Wilam., *Textg.* 159, on the grounds of metrical roughness. R. Stark, "Theocritea," *Maia* 15 (1963) 374, replies, perhaps rightly, "zu einem Kyklopengesang gehört eine Kyklopenmetrik."

will need poets. So it was in the great Golden Age of the first Hiero, who brought Simonides and Pindar to Sicily.' In sum, for Hiero II to acknowledge his own prospects is simply to recognize his own prospective need for a poet.

In this delicate process of attaching himself to Hiero's coattails Theocritus naturally has the chance to demonstrate the several styles that he commands (and some that he does not). What results is not simply a poetic sampler from which Hiero may choose, but a carefully slanted primer in poetry, which predictably leads at last to an appreciation of what is so distinctively important in Theocritus' own favored modes.[23] Starting with Homer and an Ithaca peopled by happy swains, we learn that all art aspires to the pastoral, even political art; if the gods smile on Sicily, it too can recapture the bucolic splendor of Ithaca. Theocritus takes great pains not to strain the subtlety of his audience. He keeps his pronouncements simple to the point of being obvious [24] and alludes for the most part only to works and authors familiar to everyone. Yet the strategy by which Theocritus tries to draw Hiero around to his own view of poetry is a masterpiece of indirection. Even before Hiero is gratified by his obligatory moment as the new Achilles, he sees Homer as creator as well of rustics like Eumaeus and Philoetius. By the end the poem comes back to a peaceful landscape in the vision of the Syracusan future. Hiero's own destiny will entail a similar dialectic between peace and war leading to precisely the kind of Golden Age that Theocritus is uniquely well equipped to celebrate. The war cries will no more be heard; spiders will spin their webs over armor; Hiero will need a Theocritus and need fear no loss of heroic stature thereby, for Theocritus himself can claim descent from the Odyssean and pastoral Homer.

If we wish to see Theocritus' persuasive strategies with clarity, we should bid a final good-bye to any remaining hopes for Theocritean candor. We have already noted his inconsistency: art is its

[23] "Auch hier spürt man bereits den geborenen Bukoliker."—Treu, *Misc. Rostagni* 288.

[24] Given such an audience, it is not safe to assume with Meincke (82 f. and 212 n. 1) and Horstmann (135) that the conventionality of the sentiments in the poem results from Theocritean playfulness, as if all of this profundity were being offered with a conspiratorial wink. Cf. also A. Körte, *Die hellenistische Dichtung*[2], rev. P. Händel (Stuttgart 1960) 244. Such ironies might amuse the audiences of Alexandria, as we see in the other *Idylls*, but we have no trace of such sophistication in Hiero.

own justification beyond all thoughts of utility (vv. 104 ff.), but then it is also eminently useful in preserving and spreading the κλέος of important people. Perhaps the most potent argument of all is nowhere openly admitted—one squarely opposed to the new aestheticism--and that is the argument from patriotic necessity. The increasingly strong reminiscences of the days of Pindar at the court of the first Hiero enjoin on his namesake the perpetuation of an important Sicilian tradition. The newly arrived autocrat must surely welcome anything that can bolster the legitimacy of his power; a new Pindar might help. But, in any case, a poem about poetry is the very last sort of document which we can confidently interpret *au pied du texte*. The poet's friendly offers to explain poetry to us, to make the poem a vehicle for the interpretation of itself, should at once put us on our guard. For such self-referential poetry, like any art that reflects on itself, has infinite capacities for duplicity, and Theocritus' motives here are more complex than simple playfulness.

Before considering the poem more closely, we must recognize a third and even more troublesome impediment to Theocritus' purposes, and that is that he has not been *asked* to praise Hiero. Indeed, he cannot even presume to address the regent directly, though it is Hiero and Hiero alone who can profit from the advice offered here. Theocritus' embarrassment in this regard, I submit, more than any other circumstance, accounts for the complexity of the poem's structure and, in particular, for its bifurcation into such disparate parts. As I noted above, the controversies about the intent of this poem center on the question of whether it remains a petition (*Bettelgedicht*) or should be read essentially as the barely disguised encomium that it becomes in its latter half. Scholars are surely right (*pace* Meincke 75) in insisting on an either/or proposition here, for the two forms are deeply incompatible: the mere act of asking for the assignment should disqualify the petitioner from receiving it. The poet who must advertise his services for sale is precisely the last person with whom any patron would want to link his name for all posterity. It is not for nothing that Pindar reminds his clients that he is a busy man (*Isthm.* 1.1-10). The patronage relationship will not normally be initiated by the poet. If, like Theocritus, he tries, he has some explaining to do.

Once such an arrangement has been established, the poet may freely express his satisfaction with it by requesting that it be

renewed. And it is only hopes for continuation that we hear from respectable poets (*Ol.* 13.103; *Pyth.* 10.55-59), never the pleas of outsiders trying to worm their way in.[25] The poet normally has a contract,[26] as he sometimes reminds us (*Nem.* 4.74 f., cf. vv. 79 f.; *Pyth.* 11.41-44; and fr. 194.4 Bo.). What defines the established relationship above all is reciprocity, for the poet comes as ξένος and φίλος.[27] What he receives from his host is hospitality and the tokens of guest-friendship; what he returns is an ἄποιν' ἀρετᾶς (*Pyth.* 2.14; *sim. Ol.* 7.16, *Pyth.* 5.106, and *Nem.*7.16). But such reciprocity has a proper origin only when the patron first makes his invitation and the poet then responds with his ode. Theocritus acknowledges the etiquette clearly enough at the end of *Id.* 16, when he insists that ἄκλητος (v. 106) he will stay at home, as if everything that precedes did not show him taking the initiative. In speaking first Theocritus risks the kind of scorn that Aristophanes levelled at venal poets in his *Birds*, when, among the charlatans who come to prey on Cloud-cuckooland, there comes a ragged poet to vend songs κατὰ τὰ Σιμωνίδου (v. 919).[28] Offered a jerkin, he demands a tunic. But it is the begging, not the actual exchange that is scandalous. Indeed, the established patronage relationship can actually be ennobled and made famous by the exchange of very large amounts of money. The more the poet gets, as Pindar reminds Hiero, the more important he himself is and hence the more valuable his praises (*Pyth.* 3.107-15).[29] But it is only when the reciprocity of hospitality and friendship is established and poet and patron are basking in each other's glory that ugly suspicions of venality and self-interest can be laid to rest. The need to make a petition can, therefore, rob the would-be eulogist of the dignity and authority needed to make his demonstration convincing. He forfeits in advance a very large part of the

[25] The single exception would be Bacchylides' fifth epinician ode, where, however, πείθομαι (v. 195) suggests that the poet is writing at Hiero's invitation. Even if Bacchylides is taking the initiative, he presumes to do so only on the grounds that he is Hiero's ξένος (v. 11), that is, that a bond already exists between them.

[26] See in general S. Gzella, "The Problem of the Fee in Greek Choral Lyric," *Eos* 59 (1971) 189-202.

[27] See especially H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechen-tums* (American Philological Association Monographs 13; New York 1951) 548 f.

[28] On Simonides' miserliness, see F. Schneidewin, *Simonidis Cei carminum reliquiae* (Braunschweig 1835) xxiv-xxxii, and Gow II. 308 f.

[29] For a different reading of these lines, see R. Burton, *Pindar's Pythian Odes* (Oxford 1962) 88 f.

topics that poets like Pindar found worthwhile, for only with authorization from the client does the poet have license to the kind of candor and intimacy that will create credible poetry. The bonds of friendship between artist and patron, the respect between equals, and, not least of all, the need to make interesting and lively verse all require the poet to admonish as well as congratulate the victor. Pindar's sternness toward his patrons may often surprise us, as, for example, when he reminds the ailing Hiero that the gods send men two afflictions for every blessing (*Pyth.* 3.80-82). And though his business is to portray his clients in a flattering light, Pindar of all Greek poets may be the frankest about the capacity of poetry to mask the truth (e.g. *Ol.* 1.28-34 and 10.3 f.). The poet assures us thereby that he is not only the patron's equal, but an honest man, a man of discrimination, and someone whose commendation is to be taken seriously. Properly presented, such warnings about the shortness and difficulty of life, the ephemerality of fortune, the heightened risks of standing at the pinnacle make a foil to set off the brilliance of the moment of triumph. If man is but the dream of a shadow, the rare gleam of sunshine from heaven falls all the more brightly (*Pyth.* 8.95-97).

Talking simply and directly to Hiero, Theocritus would have to forego the chiaroscuro of praise and pessimism that alone creates honorable and interesting commendation and without which he cannot pretend to an authentic revival of the epinician tradition.[30] But this is clearly not the moment to deliver up a bracing *memento mori* to the regent, no matter how crucial it may be for the texture of the form. Unsolicited praise is one thing, but unsolicited gloom and admonition might be construed as sedition. Pindar and Bacchylides came as international figures, virtually with diplomatic immunity; Theocritus is inescapably a subject accosting his regent. Yet the echoes of Pindar in *Id.* 16, and they are many, come preponderately from his darker and more sententious side. If anything, the reader will be struck by what is for Theocritus an inordinate amount of posturing as a hardheaded moralist, especially

[30] Theocritus' style elsewhere is characterized by such tonal contrasts even more markedly than is Pindar's. Most often we find an antiphonal pairing of realist and sentimentalist, lover and *irrisor amoris*, or (as in *Id.* 16) pragmatist and high-minded dreamer. See J. Kühn, "Die Thalysien Theokrits (id. 7)," *Hermes* 86 (1958) 58-61; and in general U. Ott, *Die Kunst des Gegensatzes in Theokrits Hirtengedichten* (Spudasmata 22; Hildesheim and New York 1969).

in his long jeremiad on the wicked age. Yet none of this touches Hiero, who emerges into a poem turned wildly optimistic. The poet's warning voice is clear and strong—and at a safe distance from the *laudandus*, who comes to mind only after all the distasteful business of money and mortality has run its course. By flogging sinners other than the *laudandus*, but flogging sinners nonetheless, Theocritus establishes his credentials as a man of standards, and we may for that reason be slow to spot the fragility of his subsequent pipe dreams.

But why are readers so tolerant or unaware of the radical reversal of attitude within the poem? And how do the incompatible forms of the petition and the encomium both succeed sufficiently to convince some moderns that *Id.* 16 is the one to the exclusion of the other? The answer, I suspect, lies in the near impossibility of catching the poet in contradiction when his style keeps changing. Though the poem goes off vigorously in two opposite directions, railing at this age and then hymning the next, we cannot easily weigh one part against another because of the disjunctive shift from present to future time, from the indicative to the optative, from a close and ingratiating ἐγώ to an impersonal, ceremonious evocation of Poetry itself. Even the images lead a double life. In the current wicked age, wealth is figured as rusting coin, but in the prophecy of exuberant acquisitiveness for Hiero's new Sicily wealth consists of field and flock. So great is the movement of the imagery and every other stylistic element that we may scarcely be aware that Theocritus' tirade against wealth has become a prayer for it. Each sentiment in the setting created around it has its own perfect logic, and poetically those worlds are very far apart. Had we the two halves of the poem as fragments, we might never think to join them. For by the end the outsider whose lament opened the poem has conjured up a dream in which praises already start flowing as should happen only from a favored insider. But the distance travelled is hidden in so much stylistic fluctuation, so much dazzling virtuosity, that only the keenest eye can measure the distance travelled. Here Austin [31] poses rhetorically a question which I believe admits of an answer: "Can we so forget that vivid picture of his barefoot, sulking, humiliated Graces as to see in the poem's conclusion only a conventional *topos* expressing the sweet reasonableness of our Hellenistic

[31] *TAPA* 98 (1967) 6.

poet's resignation to his limited horizons?" Yes, of course we can and are meant to. What is most significant about Austin's question is that he is the first to ask it. For the common reader such revealing cross-referencing of the evidence is obstructed by the incommensurability of the opening mime and the concluding hymn. It is, then, largely on the strength of stylistic sleights of hand, of *variatio*, that the poet can complacently end the poem by answering questions which he did not raise (what will poets sing about Hiero?), after dropping those that he actually did (who will pay for my poetry?).

With these general considerations in mind, we can now examine the poem a bit more closely. A detailed reading will allow us to proceed more rapidly with the Alexandrian poems which continue and adapt the techniques here developed for handling a patron:

The Proem (vv. 1-4)

Αἰεὶ τοῦτο Διὸς κούραις μέλει, αἰὲν ἀοιδοῖς,
ὑμνεῖν ἀθανάτους, ὑμνεῖν ἀγαθῶν κλέα ἀνδρῶν.
Μοῖσαι μὲν θεαὶ ἐντί, θεοὺς θεαὶ ἀείδοντι·
ἄμμες δὲ βροτοὶ οἵδε, βροτοὺς βροτοὶ ἀείδωμεν.

Few proems have ever said so little so imposingly. The elevated tone could suit even the loftiest topics, divine or mortal. But have we the slightest hint of what the subject of the poem is to be? or the intended audience? or the genre? or even very precisely the style? The pompous hymnic tone cannot be overlooked ("troppo alto per la sua voce," says Bignone)[32], but the proem's single assertion is that this is not to be hymn,[33] such being the business of the Muses and not of men. Even this discrimination of the roles of Muses and men, official as it sounds, turns out to have no parallel in Greek poetry (Gow II. 307) and will at once be forgotten in *Id.* 16 as well. Yet we cannot doubt that great things are to follow. The κλέα ἀνδρῶν, the very subjects of Achilles' song in his withdrawal (*Il.* 9.524), must surely anticipate some significant position to be taken in respect to Homer. In fact, the whole incantation sounds very like that of the rhapsodes in the *Homeric Hymns* (e.g. *Ap.* 1 ff.). The opening picture of Zeus and the Muses may call to mind Hesiod, as may the Muses' hymns to the gods (cf. *Theog.* 1 ff., esp. 43 f.). The elevation and abstraction of the tone would suit Pindar no less, as does the

[32] *Teocrito* 13.
[33] Cf. the analysis of S. Koster, *Antike Epostheorien* (Palingenesia 5: Wiesbaden 1970) 114 f.

contrasting of gods and men (cf. *Ol.* 1.1 ff.). Dover[34] further senses in the repetitions some traces of folksong. I would doubt none of these resonances, for the poem will realize them all as it proceeds. The allusion that is missing here is the single one that a proem is obliged to have: to the poem that follows. Theocritus has obvious reasons for avoiding commitments about what direction the poem is to take, for if the Muses were to be asked anything, it would be to sing Hiero. The poet, after all, cannot flatly deny or exclude his actual subject, even if he never formally admits it. He intends his approach to the throne to be circuitous, gradual, and all but unnoticed. Hiero will not even be mentioned for another eighty verses. Theocritus therefore acknowledges the Muses with impeccable conventionality, but simply omits to request anything of them.

The Poet's Aporia (vv. 5-13)

In proper Pindaric fashion Theocritus now proceeds to the aporetic selection of subject: 'Who of all that dwell beneath the bright daylight—merits praise'? No—'will pay for my poems?' It is another feint, as the poet announces that he cannot name a subject until he finds a buyer. And he has no immediate prospects. Having disqualified itself as a hymn, the poem hints gravely that it may not even be an encomium and, in fact, may shortly talk itself out of existence. The lofty tone is betrayed at once by an abrupt descent into the hard-edge realities of mime and folksong: 'For my Graces chide me when they come barefoot home from their vain search [for a patron]. They cower in the empty drawer with their heads bowed over chilly knees.' Suddenly we find ourselves in the book trade and not in very good company, for we have stumbled upon the ghost of the notorious Simonides. Among the testimonies to his venality is the story that, when asked to write an encomium εἰς χάριν ("free of charge"), he replied that he had one chest for money, another for thanks (χάρις), the latter holding nothing useful.[35] So much for gratitude. Theocritus has compounded

[34] *Theocritus* (Basingstoke and London 1971) 218.

[35] Σ *arg. Id.* 16; Plut. *Mor.* 520a and 555 f; Ar. *Pax* 696; Stob. 3.10.38; Tzetz. *Chil.* 8.814. The confusions in the tradition are sorted out by C. Wendel, *Überlieferung und Entstehung der Theokrit-Scholien* (AbhGött. phil.-hist. Kl. n.s. 17.2; Berlin 1920) 104 n. 1. Allusion to Simonides here has been doubted by Vahlen, *Gesammelte . . . Schriften* II. 205; K. Kuiper, "De Theocriti carmine XVI," *Mnemosyne* n.s. 17 (1889) 385; and Perrotta, *SIFC* 4 (1925) 12 f.; but Meincke's defense of it (40 f.) clearly decides the issue

the joke by making χάρις into the Χάριτες through an extension of the common Pindaric and Simonidean image of the Charites as the patronesses of epinician song. Here they become the poems themselves.[36]

The futile canvassing of the Charites recalls the bands of Greek children, disguised as crows or ravens, who begged from door to door, much as in the American "trick or treat," offering blessings or curses suited to the reception that they received. The custom is best known to us through the Rhodian swallow song (Ath. 360c), and the choliambics of Phoenix of Colophon (Ath. 359e-360a). Such songs may here have inspired details like the barefoot procession, the cold knees, and the grumbling about closed doors. The parallels, though strong, last only a few lines, so that I would not follow Merkelbach in making these *Bettelgedichte*, perhaps even some lost poems of Simonides, the model on which Theocritus bases the whole structure of *Id.* 16.[37] What the reminiscences of the begging songs do supply is a folkloristic touch to deflate the solemnity that precedes and to set the whole topic of mendicancy at the maximum stylistic remove from the lofty tone that the poet will reassume by the end.

Theocritus' *captatio benevolentiae*, his disarming lapse into fiscal hysteria, mounts a serious defense of his purposes on two counts where he is vulnerable. First, the prospective patron might well

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[36] Theocritus' compounding of Simonides' pun is best explained by Austin, *TAPA* 98 (1967) 11; cf. Horstmann 122 n. 34. On the Graces in general, see E. Schwarzenberg, *Die Grazien* (Bonn 1966), and K. Deichgräber, *Charis und Chariten, Grazie und Grazien* (Munich 1971).

[37] Merkelbach, *RhM* n.s. 95 (1952), argues for the existence of a Simonidean *Bettelgedicht*, perhaps addressed to Hiero I, on the evidence of other influences of folksong on choral lyric (chiefly in Pindar's processionals) and from the prominence of Simonides elsewhere in *Id.* 16. However, much of what Merkelbach takes to be Simonidean in the *Idyll* (e.g. the argument that only poetry confers immortality) is by no means exclusively so, and it is not clear, even if we do reconstruct a Simonidean form from *Id.* 16, how this phantom can in turn serve to explain the peculiarities of the *Idyll*. The argument works in a circle. Merkelbach insists that since Theocritus must be following a single model, he could not be overlaying inherited literary forms, such as choral lyric, with elements of folksong; the synthesis must therefore have been created already by Simonides. Yet the mixture of forms, as has been argued, is what most conspicuously characterizes *Id.* 16—far more than it does the work of Simonides as we have it or as Theocritus himself characterizes it in vv. 44 f., on which see R. Cholmeley, *The Idylls of Theocritus*[2] (London 1919) 307. In *Id.* 16 allusions to Simonides and to folksong are certain only in the first half.

expect a bit more spectacle for his money. Here stands the *soi-disant* heir of Pindar. Where, then, is the chorus? the music? the attention of all Greece? the public moment? Pindar's patrons may have been more moved or less by the long-range prospect of being immortalized in texts for generations of schoolboys, but they all commonly did enjoy the one spectacular moment, the performance. Now Theocritus presents a text that cannot possibly be sung and might not even be recited by the poet himself—mere words on a page. Poetry had lost its music.[38] The poet would be foolish to pretend otherwise, nor can he put himself forth as an accomplished musician, choreographer, and choirmaster.

Theocritus takes the offensive by admitting the limitations of his medium with beguiling frankness and cleverness. Theocritus' papyrus calls itself a papyrus[39] in unembarrassed proximity to ὑμνεῖν and ἀείδειν. Such texts are shuffled from poet to patrons, examined by prospective buyers, and fated to spend most of their time in a coffer. No more do we find, as in the proem, the poet hovering between heaven and earth in communion with the Muses. No, this artisan produces texts, publishes them, keeps accounts. Theocritus can deny none of this and chooses rather to admit it all in disarming and elegant images, which themselves attest to the extraordinary new versatility of the silent page.

Consideration of the physical dimension of poetry in relation to the other arts occurs with sufficient frequency throughout the *Idylls* to suggest that Theocritus' interest in the topic is more than casual here. The first *Idyll*,[40] which introduces the new art of the pastoral to literature, begins with a tribute to instrumental music, as Thyrsis praises the goatherd's piping. In response, the goatherd does not pipe, for Pan will not allow piping in this noontime, but chants to return and amplify the compliment in reference to Thyrsis' singing: ἁδύ (v. 1) turns into ἅδιον (v. 7).[41] The poem presents a progression from playing, to something like recitation in the formal exchange

[38] On the artistic consequences of the supplanting of oral poetry by written, see Legrand 429-36. Because of the pitch accent and highly refined meters, Greek poetry would, of course, retain some degree of musicality even in simple recitation. See Stark, *Maia* 15 (1963) 372-80.

[39] Such references to poetry not as song, but as letters on a page are extremely rare in Greek literature and are to be found perhaps no earlier than Pindar (*Ol.* 6.91).

[40] Placed first in the collection by all ancient and modern editors and clearly programmatic in function.

[41] Suggested by W. Helmbold, "Theocritus 1," *CW* 49 (1955) 59.

of compliments, to dialogue, and even to speech trying to describe and duplicate the effects of representational art as the goatherd describes the wondrous figured cup that he will offer in return for a song. *Id.* 1 ends with the lament for Daphnis, which with its refrain tries to imitate song—and all of this in a single meter and doubtless most effective when read on the page. In all, the poem presents a very thorough accounting for the continuum of media from music to the visual arts, with poetry in a privileged middle position—seen and spoken as well as sung; embellished with images as well as with meter; and uniquely capable of describing, comparing, and imitating the other arts. *The Adoniazusae*, as we shall see, will bring a similar collocation of music, poetry, and the plastic arts. In general the poetry of Alexandria reflects an intense interest in writing as a medium, especially in contrast to other media. Epigrams scribbled in a library are counterfeited to sound as if they had been engraved on stone (see Legrand 434 n. 1). As in *Idd.* 1 and 15, poets continually rival the best effects of painters and sculptors by *ecphraseis*,[42] detailed descriptions of *objets d'art*. In poetry, statues and dedications come alive to speak for themselves (Callim. *Iambi* 7 and 9, *Ep.* 5), or the poem itself may take on visual form, as in the *carmina figurata* shaped on the page like wings and altars or composed to be inscribed on eggs or Pan-pipes.[43] Written lyrics, as in *Id.* 1, are given refrains to appear sung (*Id.* 2); unperformable mimes (see Legrand 414-18) reproduce dramatic dialogue with flawless precision.

The poetry of this age, then, constantly reaches beyond the medium of writing, perhaps most importantly in trying to recapture a sense of the occasions at which verse had once been performed. If hymns, such as those of Callimachus, are no longer intended for public performance, they can compensate by creating the occasion fictively through the persona of a singer who both addresses the god as in a conventional hymn and gives to the reader a sense of the

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[42] E.g. *Id.* 1.27-63; *Id.* 15.84-86 and 112-30; *Id.* 22.30-52; Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 1.721-67. On the device in general, see P. Friedländer, *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentiarius* (Leipzig and Berlin 1912; reprinted Hildesheim and New York 1969) 1 ff. On Theocritus' use of the visual arts, see S. Nicosia, *Teocrito e l'arte figurata* (Palermo 1968).

[43] On which, see Wilam., *Textg.* 243-50; Ph.-E. Legrand, *Bucoliques grecs* II: *Pseudo-Théocrite, Moschos, Bion, Divers* (Budé; Paris 1929; reprinted 1967) 220-27; and A. Hurst, *Apollonios de Rhodes: manière et cohérence* (Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana 8; Rome 1967) 23.

ritual as it proceeds by his directions to the other participants.[44] So, too, in *Id.* 2, Simaetha, the sorceress, sets the stage for her incantation even as she is performing it (see Legrand 432). Likewise, the hymn singer in Arsinoe's Adonis festival in *Id.* 15 does not restrict herself to the celebration appropriate to the moment, but systematically provides an *ecphrasis* of the grotto (though actual worshippers could see it for themselves) and anticipates the rituals of the following day. In other words, her song creates its own setting as real hymns would never have had to do. In some respects *Id.* 16 anticipates these techniques by its extensive use of mime in this first passage. We have before us a very lively scene, virtually an agon, where the poet is confronted first with his own resentful Charites, then with the many voices of his critics. And, in a sense, these many voices stand in place of that actual chorus that the poet cannot supply. At least there is no sense of lonely isolation in a library. If the poet is no longer a performer, he can at least dramatize himself as one on paper.

Yet even if it is respectable for poetry to show up without its music, what of the poet who comes without an invitation and comes begging? Again Theocritus takes the offensive by alluding directly to the most notorious case, Simonides, whose venality was by no means forgotten by this point (cf. Callim. fr. 222 Pf.). Interpreters of *Id.* 16 have found the allusion inordinately troublesome, as if the poem could never attain high seriousness after the taint of association with Simonides. But already Pindar in *Isthmian* 2 seems to have found the way to use his rival's bad reputation to his own advantage.[45] The Muse, he concedes, is now an ἐργάτις, very possibly with an overtone of prostitution.[46] But, alas, such is the age. And the audience should recall that Pindar is nearly above reproach compared to some people he could mention: that is, he sets his hearers' thoughts working in the direction of Simonides. Pindar himself can proceed to nobler topics, for Thrasybulus is wise and what is all of this compared to the splendor of his victory?

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[44] On Callimachus' "mimetic hymns" (*Ap.*, *Lav. Pall.*, *Cer.*), see Deubner, *NJbb* 47 (1921) 376 f.; H. Herter, "Bericht über die Literatur zur hellenistischen Dichtung aus den Jahren 1921-1935" in Bursian's *Jahresb* 255 (1937) 191 f.; and H. Erbse, "Zum Apollonhymnos des Kallimachos," *Hermes* 83 (1955) 411-19.

[45] That Pindar has Simonides in mind here is the contention of the scholiast who adduces Callim. fr. 222 Pf., and of Wilamowitz, *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 312.

[46] So C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford 1964) 355 f.

In exactly the same way Theocritus exculpates himself by pointing facetiously to a manifestly worse case and proceeding to the evils of his own age, then to the glories of Hiero, which make such monetary considerations seem trivial. Theocritus, no less than Pindar, profits from comparison to Simonides, who, in the anecdote cited, unabashedly weighed money against empty thanks, never mind the art. But it is precisely the poems and their survival, his art, that concerns Theocritus, rather than simply his own advantage. By emphasizing that poems, not poets, need money to exist, Theocritus has somewhat deflected charges of venality from himself. Whatever the awkwardness of speaking first of his own material needs, the request is made indelibly and early, leaving the rest of the poem to rise to more dignified topics, in the course of which even Simonides will be rehabilitated because of his art and become θεῖος ἀοιδός (v. 44).[47]

The Poet and his Critics (vv. 14-33)

Innocently caught between his art and his age, the poet no sooner locks up his resentful Charites than he faces a chorus of Philistines, who vigorously oppose the poet's calling: 'Charity begins at home.' 'Art is its own reward.' 'If we have Homer, do we need you?'[48] These are common enough arguments, I am sure; but it should be noted how carefully Theocritus has shaped them to set the stage for his *apologia*. If the critics barrage him with clichés, he will naturally reply in conventional and simple terms himself. Were he lecturing directly to his readership, he should feel obliged to present something a bit more sophisticated. But, as I have suggested, complexity and depth might not advance his case with Hiero. The nastiness and meanness of these critics easily justify some high-minded moralizing, which just happens to restore the tone of the poem back to a loftier level: 'Wealth is not to be hoarded, but used to care for kin, friends, gods, guests, and, yes, for the holy interpreters of the Muses.'[49] Placed last, poets inherit the pieties felt toward all of

[47] Having the merest fragments of Simonides' poetry we can follow Theocritus' rehabilitation of him here only with difficulty. We would do well to be cautioned by the reminder from Wilamowitz, *Sappho und Simonides* (Berlin 1913) 137, that Simonides is put at an unfair disadvantage in our estimation because we know him only by anecdote, while Pindar we judge from his poems.

[48] On the various positions here represented, see Treu, *Misc. Rostagni* 286, and Meincke 45 f.

[49] Some interpreters would see a more deferential tone here. See A.

the groups that precede. Clearly the argument has reverted to a higher plane, away from the mean particulars of the poet's own circumstances and back up to a noble generality. No more the entrepreneur, Theocritus now belongs to the holy guild of prophets, Μοισάων . . . ἱεροὺς ὑποφήτας;[50] Pindar comes to mind again as a prime model.[51] Theocritus is no longer assaulting prospective patrons with requests, but suffering nobly as an injured party, against whom offenses are no less sacrilegious than against kin, gods, and guests.

The sentiments, to be sure, are hopelessly trite. But at least they leave Theocritus open to no challenges as he mounts his pulpit. They do indeed sound as if they had been anthologized from Pindar,[52] but their canonical quality in itself bolsters Theocritus' authority to preach thus and pulls Pindar firmly into focus as his primary literary model. Having only a few lines to evoke the whole defunct epinician tradition, Theocritus cannot scatter his sententiae as casually as did the poets of the fifth century, who could rely on a cumulative effect. And if the form demands sententiousness, why be evasive about it? Theocritus therefore concentrates his homily here, where it bolsters his own case and keeps a safe distance from the as yet unacknowledged Hiero, who may well profit from the message, but certainly cannot suspect that the rebuke is aimed directly at him.

The actual and fictive audiences must be very clearly discriminated at this point. The actual audience will naturally consider themselves among the φρονέουσιν (v. 23), the wise men who stand apart from the sins of the age. Theocritus thus begins his sermonizing with a slight, but tactful gesture to that audience: of course, they will know all of this. None of them will answer directly to the dismissive call of Δαιμόνιοι (v. 22), which falls somewhere between "My good men" and "You fools."[53] The address here is made to the

Wifstrand, "Zu Theokrits Charites," in *Misc. Rostagni* 309; and Horstmann 125.

[50] Koster, *Antike Epostheorien* 115, labels the unannounced change in Theocritus' relationship to the Muses "ein trügerisches Sophisma."

[51] E.g. μαντεύεο, Μοῖσα, προφατεύσω δ' ἐγώ (fr. 137 Bo.). See Meincke 60 n. 1.

[52] E.g. *Pyth.* 1.89-100; *Nem.* 1.31 f.; *Isthm.* 1.67 f. and 2.37-42. See Clapp. *CP* 8 (1913) 311 f.; Perrotta, *SIFC* 4 (1925) 16-21; Meincke 82 f.

[53] Whatever tones of indignancy (Meincke 47) or expostulatory irony (Horstmann 125) Δαιμόνιοι may have, it is scarcely an appropriate way for a poet to address his audience, especially a royal one. Theocritus uses it elsewhere (*Id.* 22.62 and 145; *Id.* 29.36) with a tinge of contemptuousness.

imagined chorus of critics, and Theocritus will continue the pose of speaking to them for almost half the poem, down to his final concession of the futility of trying to talk sense into anyone like this and his formal dismissal of the type: χαιρέτω ὅστις τοῖος (v. 64). The long sermon forms an independent unit in the poem as it works in a ring, with two long strings of maxims surrounding a survey of the history of poetry, which works from Simonides back to Homer. It must be recognized, as is usually overlooked, that Theocritus is continuing his mock-debate through these lines rather than presuming to instruct his actual audience directly (cf. Horstmann 123), as Pindar or Bacchylides would not have hesitated to do. Theocritus claims to be doing nothing more than demonstrating how he would enlighten certain misguided souls who happen not to be his immediate audience. But he does not automatically presume to speak as the unchallengeable conscience of the community as poets once had. And though these old maxims are a bit dusty, the audience is not being subjected to them as they would have been in the fifth century. The shoe may fit, but Theocritus certainly is not saying so.[54] They are merely spectators to an ingenious and lively dramatic scene, a poem within a poem.

Theocritus' *apologia* for poetry is absolutely commonplace, and poets as different as Homer (*Il.* 6.357 f. and *Od.* 8.597 f.) and Sappho [55] had a more profound view of art's immortalizing function. This disquisition merits attention, however, for what it does *not* say. The issues skirted in this mock-debate, the charges not easily answered and therefore suppressed, tell us a bit more about how Theocritus expected or wanted poetry to fit into the life of the community. He does not, for one thing, admit that the world has

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See in general E. Brunius-Nilsson, Δαιμόνιε: *An Inquiry into a Mode of Apostrophe in Old Greek Literature* (Uppsala 1955), which must be used in conjunction with H.-J. Newiger's corrections and additions in *Gnomon* 31 (1959) 104-9.

[54] Austin can see self-defeating irony in the poem to the extent that he does only by overlooking how carefully Theocritus has exempted Hiero from the criticisms in this passage. Directed toward Hiero, these would be the "warning" or even "veiled threat" that Austin takes them to be. However, the lengths to which Theocritus has gone to keep Hiero at a safe distance from this tirade underscore the earnestness of his intentions toward the prospective patron.

[55] Sappho fr. 55 L.P. seems the immediate inspiration for vv. 30 f. For other parallels, see Gow II. 311 f.

changed since the fifth century. Yes, the medium of poetry, if not its essence, has evolved (or declined) from song into silence, and Theocritus has admitted as much. But there is no sign that poetry has been shunted aside by its own offshoot, the artistic prose which had flourished so brilliantly for the last century.[56] Monarchs like Hiero were less interested in a few glorious lines of an ode than in the more expansive, philosophical, and politically helpful praises of the prose encomium. Theocritus knows this well enough, as he shows in Alexandria when he adapts what was to be called the βασιλικὸς λόγος to verse for Ptolemy (*Id.* 17). But in *Id.* 16 the topic is simply omitted. Nor does Theocritus allow that in an age of supreme monarchs and vast cities the poet cannot speak for and to the *demos* as he once had. He insists that people still treasure the classics (chiefly Homer) and that Hiero's triumph can reverse history sufficiently to put the poet back on center stage. Most importantly, Theocritus still takes heroic values to be axiomatic: men should do glorious deeds so that they may earn κλέος. When heroism slackens, so does poetry; they can return together. The problems of the current age that cause the poet to be shunted aside are presented in such a way that Hiero can solve them with a few battles and a little bit of money for the arts. In promoting a restitution of poetry to its old role in society, Theocritus either does not foresee or will not admit that art, even when well supported, can no longer be public in the way that it once was.

The History of Poetry (vv. 34-57)

Where the epinician poet would provide a paradigmatic myth, Theocritus bolsters his argument by surveying the history of poetry from Simonides back to the epic cycle and finally to Homer's *Odyssey*. The transition into this history seems, on the surface, purely associative: 'The unremembered dead are as wretched as serfs.[57] Many were the serfs of Antiochus and Aleuas, but despite all their wealth these kings would be forgotten were it not for Simonides.'[58] The survey will end similarly with a balancing view of

[56] On which, see Wilam., *H.D.* I. 91-96.

[57] Horstmann (126 n. 55) raises the possibility that the comparison of the wretchedness of death to the state of servants may hearken back to Achilles' lament in the *Odyssey* (11.488 ff.) that he would rather be a serf on earth than king of the dead.

[58] That poetry is the single escape from the oblivion of death is also a standard theme of epinician poetry itself, e.g. Pind. *Ol.* 10.91-96, *Pyth.* 3.112-15, *Nem.* 7.12-16, *Isthm.* 1.67 f.; Bacchyl. 9.82-87.

Odysseus' servants and of his escape from Hades. In the interval the subjects of immortalizing poetry grow increasingly monumental as we progress from the Thessalians—heroic, it seems, mainly in their herds; to the Lycians, the Trojans, and Achilles' victim Cycnus—warriors, to be sure, but losers. Cycnus serves to make a particularly deft transition here, for he is a figure both of epinician poetry (Pindar *Ol.* 2.82 and *Isthm.* 5.39), such as precedes, and of the epic cycle (probably the *Cypria*), so that he introduces the Homeric poems to follow.[59] The history proper ends with Odysseus, whose successes consist chiefly in escape and survival. The actual climax of the series, the evocation of the *Iliad*, is found in the next segment, when Hiero emerges as the new Achilles. At that point, the retrograde series pivots around Achilles-Hiero for a prophetic leap into a vision of a new Golden Age, which will simply renew the virtues of the old. Like Hesiod, Theocritus finds himself at the nadir of the cycle,[60] but more optimistically looks forward to an age when men will be heroes again, and heroes, of course, will have poets. Poetry and heroism follow the cycle together, for the reversion from the insignificant Thessalians back to Achilles also traces an ascent from Simonides to Homer. It was the great war that produced the great poet. History itself in its grandest outlines dictates that it is not simply desirable for Hiero's glorious new age to have great poetry, but inevitable.

The further Theocritus gazes into the past, the less he sees of poetry's historical context and the more he feels its essence. At the start his Charites are papyri, salable goods, and their actual subject matter remains a mystery. Simonides in Thessaly cuts quite a figure in his own right, but with "divine bard" (v. 44) we part company with him with more attention to his art than to his life. For the epic cycle Theocritus presents only anonymous ἀοιδοί (v. 50) and, even with great Homer himself, more the texts than the man: "the songs of an Ionian gentleman" (v. 57). Hereafter Theocritus will mention no poets by name. Pindar and Bacchylides, as well as Homer, will figure in an important way in what follows, but as

[59] The coincidence of subject matter between Pindar and the epic cycle sufficiently accounts for the plural ἀοιδοί (v. 50), which will, therefore, not support Gow's deduction (II. 316) that Theocritus here explicitly rejects Homeric authorship of the *Cypria*.

[60] Callimachus' *Iambus* 3 (fr. 193 Pf.) also echoes Hesiod's wish (*Op.* 174) to live in another age and ends (vv. 34 ff.) with a pessimistic view very like Theocritus' of how badly the poet fares in a materialistic age

texts, not as historical individuals—and texts echoed, but not cited. Talk about poetry gives way to demonstration of its power. Scholars who insist on Simonides' dominant influence on the poem because he is named, while Pindar is not, have got things exactly turned around. Simonides is cited early and overtly because of his lesser importance as a mere example—and not the most imposing one—of what *poets* once were. For the more profound question of what *poetry* eternally is we must look to what Theocritus demonstrates hereafter by blending his own music with Pindar's.[61] A number of the poet's initial problems cannot follow him up into this timeless aesthetic realm: money, for one, and the pernicious passage of time that has made dead poets into classics and living poets into beggars.

The Hymnic Transition (vv. 58-72)

Theocritus concludes his address to the misguided with a sense to despair; the covetous will not listen. 'One might as well try to tabulate the waves on the beach [62] or cleanse a brick in water. Good riddance to them.' The greedy leave (φιλοκερδείῃ βεβλαμμένον v. 63) much as they were introduced (νενίκηνται δ' ὑπὸ κερδέων v. 15) [63] and return us to the opening question: who will be the patron? Again as in the proem the style is hymnic, and the hexameter falls into couplets; [64] again the combination of Muses and poets dominates the scene. Even the dismissal of one subject and the transition to

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[61] As already C. von Holzinger, *Philologus* 51 (1892) 194 f., pointed out, Theocritus' subtlety in leaving his central model unnamed is worthy of Pindar himself. Perrotta, *SIFC* 4 (1925) 23, further suggests that the broad pattern of allusion may recall to the second Hiero Pindar's advice to the first: μὴ κάμνε λίαν δαπάναις (*Pyth.* 1.90).

If Theocritus' ἱερῶν (v. 47) is a pun for 'Ἱέρων (cf. v. 80), then it is a Pindaric one, for we find it in a hyporcheme for Hiero: ζαθέων ἱερῶν ὁμώνυμε πάτερ, κτίστορ Αἴτνας (fr. 94.2 f. Bo.).

[62] For other examples of this proverb, see Gow II. 317 and Wifstrand, *Misc. Rostagni* 309 f.

[63] Similarly, the poet's journey (κεχαρισμένος ἔλθω / σὺν Μοίσαις v. 68 f.) is described much as it will be at the end of this second movement as the poem draws to a close (θαρσήσας Μοίσαισι σὺν ἁμετέραισιν ἵοιμ' ἂν v. 107), and the obligation to celebrate Sicily is phrased at the end in terms (μέλοι . . ὑμνεῖν vv. 102 f.) which unmistakably recall the proem (μέλει . . . ὑμνεῖν vv. 1 f.). On such repetitions as a structural feature of the poem, see M. Pohlenz, "Die hellenistische Poesie und die Philosophie," in Χάριτες . . . *Friedrich Leo* (Berlin 1911) 98 n. 3 = *Kleine Schriften* II, ed. H. Dörrie (Hildesheim 1965) 23 n. 3.

[64] For the phenomenon of "strophische Gliederung" in general, see Wilam . *Textg.* 137-51, who, however, overlooks this passage.

another (χαιρέτω v. 64 and αὐτὰρ ἐγώ v. 66) seem distinctively those of the rhapsode in the *Homeric Hymns* (*Cer.* 495, *Ap.* 545 f. *et al.*; cf. Meincke 58 n. 1). And again a certain deviousness lurks under the hieratic tone. Though Theocritus is to all appearances making a fresh start in the poem, in fact we are not at all back to where we started. The *apologia* for poetry has been formally discarded, but it cannot be struck from the record; and, of course, its impact on the audience is not at all affected by his ostensible abandonment of it. In the course of making his defense, the poet has inched closer to assuming the poetic role which he initially could only request. The poetic ἐγώ differs markedly from what we first heard from Theocritus as a beleagured individual, for now he is not anxious about money, but quite the opposite: 'I would take fame and friendship over wealth of mules and horses.' He has, as Dover[65] notes, assumed the perspective of his rich audience, so that the first person begins to include the audience as well, just as we sometimes find in Pindar when he is giving advice (e.g. *Ol.* 3.44 f. and *Pyth.* 3.61 f.)[66] Theocritus comes accompanied not by his troublesome Charites, but by the Muses. Most importantly, he comes as guest in the sacred, scarcely mercenary bond of ξενία. Theocritus continues to extend and dignify the Simonidean pun: he will come κεχαρισμένος (v. 68); yet now this is not the χάρις of money, but rather the χάρις of hospitality. The poet has in a sense dissociated himself from all that precedes: the embarrassing business with money, the unworthy task of proving that poetry is important. But he has made his point.

The poem's imagery reflects the radical change of direction here, for the dominant systems of the first half reverse themselves in the second. Theocritus' harangue against covetousness figures the constraints on the mortal condition in terms of descent, enclosure, and perishability. In addition to the futile canvassing of the Charites and their return to the bottom of the coffer (vv. 5 ff.) we find periodic descents into Hades (vv. 30 f. and 42 f.), which itself suggests enclosure, as does Charon's capacious boat (vv. 40 f.) and the coffers for gold (vv. 10 and 22 f.). Wealth is rusting coin (v. 17)

[65] *Theocritus* 225.

[66] For the first person used to articulate generally applicable principles of conduct, see E. des Places, *Le Pronom chez Pindare* (Études et Commentaires 3; Paris 1947) 9; Bowra, *Pindar* 360 f.; and, in general, M. Lefkowitz, "ΤΩ ΚΑΙ ΕΓΩ: The First Person in Pindar," *HSCP* 67 (1963) 177-253.

or the Thessalian serfs and herds, which have vanished now without a trace. Even Cycnus' maiden-like skin (v. 49), given his bloody death, calls to mind the vulnerability of flesh. These images converge in the reminiscences of the *Odyssey*, whose hero also descends to Hades (vv. 52 f.) and gets himself trapped in the cave of the Cyclops (v. 53). In both cases, of course, he escapes; and thereafter we hear little of descent and confinement in the poem. Until this point Theocritus has shown time bringing nothing but loss: death to the living, oblivion to the dead, the decline of poetry and heroism. Odysseus' six-score months of wandering had nearly consumed him, even as his flocks were being devoured in Ithaca. Yet he returns to find capable servants like Eumaeus and Philoetius who can renew his wealth and, most remarkably, to rejoin a father still living, still heroically vigorous: περίσπλαγχνος Λαέρτης (v. 56). Having finally become benign, the passage of time ceases to be noted in the poem and is supplanted by primary attention to the dimension of space, which is first suggested in Odysseus' wanderings. The long view will entail far-flung lands rather than lost ages. Theocritus' vision of the future repeats and reverses these themes in a mirror-image of what precedes. Death and decline figure less as the common human destiny than as just retribution for the Carthaginians (vv. 85 ff.). Encapsulation comes only to the unused weapons buried in spider webs (vv. 96 f.). In place of the stasis and confinement of the opening images, Theocritus now presents global images of the rout of the Carthaginians (vv. 85 ff.) and Hiero's fame spreading itself to the ends of the earth (vv. 98 ff.). The journeys are now those of the poet when properly invited (vv. 68 f. and 106 f.), as well as the traveller returning at evening (v. 93), a scene which extends the reminiscence of Odysseus' return to Ithaca. His triumph over Hades is not the last in the poem, for Persephone too was released and returned to her mother (vv. 83 f.), as Odysseus to his father. Arethusa, herself a symbol of Syracuse, is hardly less miraculous in emerging from the underworld. It is not gold or perishable possessions which are seen in multiples now, but the messengers who bear bad tidings to the enemy (vv. 85 ff.) and, more affirmatively, the ranks of poets as bestowers of immortality (vv. 101 ff.). The countless sheep of the new prosperity encourage precisely the same material hopes that had earlier been dashed by the grim memory of the numbered and now perished chattels of the Thessalians. The Syracusan flocks, like Odysseus',

flourish as the perpetual yield of a fertile and well-ordered land, so that wealth comes to be characterized by the naturalness of its source rather than by the social abuses to which it lends itself. The human lives once so circumscribed in time now have their extensive impact in space. But the clash of Theocritus' two very contradictory sets of attitudes in the two halves of the poem does not emerge glaringly, because each perspective fits so naturally into the world pictured imagistically around it. Wealth is rusting coin when rejected, field and flock when celebrated. The present fallen age needs a good, rousing *memento mori*, while the future retains its prospects for attainment.

It is through these images that Theocritus manages the delicate operation of moving from one view of the world to the other. On the literal level, his transition is baffling: 'Hard are the ways of poets who go without the Muses. Nor is heaven wearied of bringing around the months.[67] That man will need me who has proved himself a new Achilles. . .' Immediately before, Theocritus' comparison of the futility of exhorting the covetous to that of counting waves has somewhat neutralized the moralist's obsession with number and transferred the notion of multiplicity from ephemeral and perishable wealth into inexhaustible natural cycles. The image of

[67] With Wifstrand (*Misc. Rostagni* 310), I read the manuscripts' ἅρματος in v. 72, a verse which Wilamowitz' ἅματος (accepted by Gow and Dover) would reduce to a near repetition of the preceding line. The chariot may be solar (Σ and Cholmeley), agonistic (Σ and Wifstrand), or military. In light of the transitional nature of the imagery here, I suspect that Theocritus has left the figure ambiguous so as to suggest all three. Coming after v. 71, the line will naturally appear to continue its astral imagery. Likewise, in the larger context of the images of racing in vv. 46 f. and v. 67, it will also suggest racing-chariots, as befits the Pindaric cast of the figurative language. Yet the line is leading directly to the advent of Hiero, whose immediate concern will be war, not sport. Given the Iliadic imagery to follow, there is little reason to heed Gow's objection (II. 319) that Hiero may not actually have had war-chariots, a point on which the evidence is slim indeed; see Gow, "The *Adoniazusae* of Theocritus," *JHS* 58 (1938) 189. The chariot image makes a suitable pivot for the larger system of metaphors of the road and of travel (vv. 7, 28, 47, 51, 58, 69, 93, 98 f. 106 f.).

The transition within the imagery also explains Theocritus' renunciation of wealth of horses and mules in v. 67, which Gow (II. 318 f.) finds troublesome as an apparent rejection of Pindar's subject matter. This it precisely is, for Theocritus is directing Pindar's style to questions of war and peace at some distance from the contests which his predecessor celebrated. Theocritus detaches himself from Pindar's subject matter in vv. 66 f., but in terms which are themselves identifiably Pindaric; cf. *Nem.* 1.31 f. and 8.37-39 (adduced by Perrotta, *SIFC* 4 [1925] 17).

waves is followed by that of the sun, but here the endless series of days suggests opportunity in the passage of time rather than simple decline. Instead of descents to Hades, the poem now presents the sun climbing up to heaven. The road becomes easy for the poet who comes with the Muses. Even the odd pair of water images, waves on the shore and the brick in water, work themselves into place. Hitherto Theocritus has shown only the waters of death (Acheron, vv. 31 and 41); this pair of images figures only futility; there follows finally the optimistic image of Arethusa and of the other bodies of water that will witness Hiero's triumphs (vv. 84, 86, and 99). The transition from the somber images of the poem's first half to their positive counterparts in the rest pivots here on the central symbols of mutability: the sea, the dissolving brick, the revolving heavens. To be sure, Theocritus goes forth on a very sublime level indeed. Were he more matter-of-fact, he would reveal how extensively he is altering the base of his argument.

The Advent of Hiero (vv. 73-81)

Theocritus long searched futilely for a subject because he was searching in the wrong tense. Now in the future tense of confident prophecy—ἔσσεται οὗτος ἀνήρ (v. 73)—he focuses in effortlessly on the new Achilles: 'The Carthaginians tremble for fear. The Syracusans stand poised with their spears. And there in the midst stands Hiero with crested plume.' Theocritus has finally and inevitably arrived at the bombast that Hiero most expects and which he himself least controls—a precarious moment, especially as he is now for the first time naming the subject so long avoided. However, the importation here of the loftiest heroic tones, despite its tastelessness, has very distinct advantages for a poet out of his depth. Since Homer is the most aloof of poets, Theocritus, however vividly he may have characterized himself earlier in the poem, may and must retreat into an impersonal and detached style at a moment when he might well not want to confront the regent face to face. Like Homer he can treat what he reports as simple fact—at the very moment when he is drifting into wishful thinking.

Yet it would be folly to parrot Homer for more than an instant, and Theocritus has his escape well planned. He takes up heroic subject matter, but freezes the action as Homer never would. A decent curator can assemble spears, shields, and helmets; only a genius can set them in motion, and Theocritus foregoes the attempt.

He leaps from the anticipation of the campaign to its effects, conveniently skipping over the details of battles that are as yet only prospective.

At this point even the meter itself, for being Homeric, could invite devastating comparisons. Pindar can sound Homeric in lyric meters no less deftly than Theocritus' hexameter can become Pindaric.[68] But in writing an epinician ode for Sosibius, Callimachus knew better than to rival Pindaric metrics and chose couplets instead. Here Theocritus avoids comparison to the inimitable flow of Homeric hexameter by continuing the distichal solemnity of the hymnic transition, reinforcing his couplets with symmetrical pairings of names (Achilles-Ajax; Simois-Ilus; Phoenicians-Syracusans), either in the same position in succeeding lines or at the caesura and the line end. Pairs of adjectives and substantives locate themselves in similar conformations (vv. 79 and 81).[69] The couplets fall into distinctly un-Homeric and tight cadences well suited for conveying the tense anticipation which is to be broken by the style of the prayer as it opens from an expanding tricolon into a flowing six line period.

The Prayer (vv. 82-103)

Theocritus has momentarily indulged any taste for the heroic that Hiero might have, but only to lead him to something beyond. The prayer for the future commences with a full Homeric line (*Il.* 2.371):

αἲ γάρ, Ζεῦ τε πάτερ καὶ Ἀθηναίη καὶ Ἄπολλον

adapted for the religious concerns of Syracuse (vv. 82 ff.):

αἲ γάρ, Ζεῦ κύδιστε πάτερ καὶ πότνι' Ἀθάνα
κούρη θ' ἣ σὺν ματρὶ πολυκλήρων Ἐφυραίων
εἴληχας μέγα ἄστυ παρ' ὕδασι Λυσιμελείας, . . .

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[68] Theocritus may be playing on Pindar's own use of Homer in ὁπλοτέροις (v. 46), a form extremely rare outside of epic and distinctive enough to be used mock-heroically by Aristophanes (*Pax* 1270), but clearly favored by Pindar (comp.: *Pyth.* 6.41; superl.: *Isthm.* 6.6 and 8.20).

[69] The closest comparisons stylistically are the formal responsions of *Id.* 1.1-11 and the stilted symmetries of Simichidas' glorification of the country festival, *Id.* 7.135-47 (in which note the incidence of internal rhyme, *Sperrung*, and chiastic word order). There is perhaps not sufficient appreciation of how extremely well, but sparingly, the Alexandrians employ the word orders favored by the Roman neoterics.

But the substance of the prayer, in fact, derives directly from Pindar's prayer for the first Hiero (*Pyth.* 1.67 ff.), who also had his troubles with the Carthaginians and devastated them brilliantly off Cumae in 474 B.C. The second Hiero can only be tantalized by the prospect that history may repeat itself. Pindar, inextricably bound up in that memory of Syracuse's finest moment, surely commends a similar office for the poet who echoes him so adroitly. Setting himself openly beside the classical poets in the mode of *aemulatio*, Theocritus in the first half of the poem consistently skirts unflattering comparisons by taking the low road: Simonides in Thessaly, the *Cypria*, the Ithacan *Odyssey*. Here where the poetic precedent becomes crucial and imposing, Theocritus tempers the ζῆλος Πινδαρικός by retreating into the less presumptuous mode of tribute and *imitatio*. It would be preposterous for Theocritus to voice openly his presumptions to being the new Pindar. For that reason he does not even name the man; the verse itself will prove how worthily he serves as the master's heir. Furthermore, Pindar can be counted as an ally in Theocritus' resistance to the pressure to be Homeric. As war should lead to peace, Hiero must be alive to the possibilities of a style of praise subtler and more delicate than the old heroics, that is, to the style that Theocritus himself commands. He reinforces his claim by evoking the peaceful and rich countryside in tones reminiscent of Bacchylides and Hesiod as well as Pindar.[70] The gentle images of cattle grazing, the cicada singing, the spiders spinning their webs over armor diffuse, but do not diminish the strong patriotic injunction to renew the Sicilian tradition of the great days of the epinician poets. Theocritus' lines may in fact be no more than fond dreams for the future, yet they seem authentic and substantial because they are so founded in an important historical memory and constructed out of the oldest sorts of poetic materials.

The real brilliance of Theocritus' lovely prophecy may lie in what it avoids mentioning. Local history would warn the poet to proceed cautiously, for the tyrants had shown themselves variously indifferent to poets (Gelon), appreciative but testy (Hiero I), and downright treacherous (Dionysius I). Indeed, Theocritus has the myth of Polyphemus and Galataea (*Idd.* 6 and 11) from Philoxenus.

[70] On this landscape, see W. Elliger, *Die Darstellung der Landschaft in der griechischen Dichtung* (Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 15; Berlin and New York 1975) 319.

who ended up in Dionysius' stone quarries for some witticisms about the tyrant. I have already discussed the extent to which Hiero II at this point cheated the aspiring encomiast of the standard themes. One could not even address him as king yet, it seems. But did a prudent man refer to him as anything less, especially when referring to the future? Theocritus does not attempt the risky task of rendering a pleasing portrait such as might involve clarity on such touchy issues. He shows rather the long shadow that Hiero casts and leaves the man's virtues to be deduced from his impact. As a loyal Syracusan Theocritus can be expansive about what he hopes Hiero's accomplishments to be without appearing sycophantic to the ruler himself. Lacking the communal voice of the Pindaric chorus, Theocritus can at least compensate by attuning his hopes to those of the city and project himself thereby into the position of speaking for it.

Because Theocritus says so little to Hiero directly, a number of scholars have plumbed for covert messages on the level of allegory. While Hiero is surely meant to overhear and profit from Theocritus' indictment of his fictive critics, I doubt that he has mined it with covert admonitions to Hiero himself: 'Entertain the stranger and despatch him when he wants to go.' (vv. 27 f.) = Do not behave like Dionysius I to Plato (Gow II.311; Meincke 48 n. 3). 'Simonides immortalized the Thessalians.' (vv. 34-47) = Consider how generous to poets is that court now under Antigonus Gonatas; will you be outdone? [71] But surely such taunts, no matter how well encoded, are as unnecessary as they are risky. Allegorizing of this sort was common at the Alexandrian court, but only under conditions radically different from those in Syracuse. The monarchs had through the ruler cult picked their own mythological correlatives, which could be subtly, because regularly, employed—and most importantly, always for the purpose of flattery. Given Theocritus'

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[71] G. Haberlin, *De figuratis carminibus Graecis* (diss. Hanover 1886) 56 f. Similarly, "Heaven rewards the poet." = Remember how the Dioscuri saved Simonides from being destroyed with his ungrateful patrons (Cic. *De. Or.* 2.352). So Gow II. 310 and Horstmann 123 n. 38; Meincke (46 n. 2) doubts the allusion. That Hiero is compared to Achilles and Ajax (v. 74) suggests to Wilamowitz (*Textg.* 155 f.) and Meincke (65 n. 3) that the uncrowned Hiero is being spared comparison to a king. Perhaps, but how flattering or auspicious would any comparison be to Agamemnon as general and as returning king?

extreme caution in approaching Hiero, I see no reason to suspect that he might be sending veiled and perhaps inflammatory political messages.

The more fruitful question is how Theocritus contrives to engage a political figure without himself becoming political. Earlier Greek poets with their keener sense of social calling might have found such evasion ignoble; there is little doubt that Hellenistic princes made it essential. *The Charites*, as far as we know, is the inauguration of the pastoral encomium,[72] and serves, therefore, as an object lesson in how a poet can translate political realities into a realm where they become natural and hence comfortingly inevitable.[73] Theocritus voices his expectations for the new dispensation in Sicily with great conviction. But what do they amount to finally but a green thought in a green shade, "une paisible affection pour le pays natal" (Legrand)?[74]

What precisely will Hiero have done? He will have routed the Carthaginians and brought lasting peace to the reclaimed Sicilian lands—so much we can assume. The Golden Age that Theocritus describes must then follow from this peace. But his vision, for all its splendor, is scrupulously narrow. For what do we see of the new Sicily but the regent at one end of society and joyful peasants at the other? Because later courtly poetry was to be peopled so largely by kings and herdsmen, we may well wonder how Theocritus has come to single out and pair them here for the first time in a courtly context. Either of these polar groups may adequately stand for the community at large, for, being at the margins of society, they both escape its internal stratifications: bearing all of the responsibility for the society is very like bearing none. Standing respectively above and beyond the community, king and shepherd enjoy a privileged relationship with nature. It is as king and herdsman (or fisherman) that the Christ can stand as a symbol of all mankind; Theocritus encompasses Ithacan life by the complementary symbols of Odysseus and Eumaeus. Most importantly, these two opposite and self-sufficient groups in society can close ranks to block out

[72] *Pace* H. Bardon, "Bucolique et politique," *RhM* n.s. 115 (1972) 1 f., who assumes a complete cleavage between politics and the pastoral in the *Idylls*.

[73] See W. Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London 1935), esp. Chapter One, "Proletarian Literature."

[74] *La Poésie alexandrine* (Paris 1924) 41.

that middle group of men whose role within society is necessarily political and who slip less easily into the contours of myth. It is this middle group to which the poet belongs, as does any audience who might be edified hearing the *laudes Hieronis*. I should not raise the issue had the poem not begun with a clear focus on this middle group of citizens, the man on the street, and on urban life—precisely the aspect of Sicilian life here omitted. Theocritus cannot, like a visiting Pindar or Bacchylides, pretend to be above such realities or to speak as other than a subject addressing his regent. But whatever differences of rank or taste or motive may separate poet and *laudandus*, the landscape is something that both can view in precisely the same way, as they might not anything closer to home.[75] In this vision of the future the poet may then omit to depict those political circumstances which make his own address to the monarch so awkward.

Having abandoned the moralist's ferocious insistence on individual responsibility, Theocritus looks more serenely to the land as a whole as it is attuned to the will of the gods, the larger cycles of history, and the rhythms of nature. Stylistically he has moved from verism to myth, for it is in terms of the most primeval myths that Theocritus defines the nature of the new ruler. The imagery in the poem pivots, as we have seen, around the return of Odysseus, which brings Ithaca the kind of renewal predicted here for Sicily. Odysseus himself in his first words as a beggar to Penelope (*Od.* 19.107-14) ascribes such regeneration to the sympathy of the land to the true king.[76] Equally, when the throne is polluted, the land suffers plague, as in the Oedipus myth. Such myths survived the passing of the monarchy, for the just city and the just political order also make the land flourish (e.g. Hes. *Op.* 225-37 and Aesch. *Eum.* 937 ff.). If anything, the *ideal* of monarchy had been strength-

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[75] For a more skeptical view of the compatibility of politics and the pastoral, see T. Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1969) 122-25.

[76] The myth is central to Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, especially Part I, *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings* (2 vols., London 1911). See also M. Delcourt, *Stérilités mystérieuses et naissances maléfiques dans l'antiquité classique* (Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liége 83; Liége 1938). English readers will perhaps be most familiar with the concept through the "fisher king" of T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land," a figure derived from his readings in Frazer and Jessie L. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* (Cambridge 1920; reprinted New York 1957).

ened in the popular imagination by the realities of oligarchy and even by the disappointments of democracy.[77] As an antidote to tyranny, the hope for the true king would have particular resonance in Sicily. It was in this direction that Plato and Isocrates focussed their idealism and the Diadochi aimed their propaganda. Likewise, in Theocritus' vision of the Golden Age, it is the earth itself that will ultimately confirm and bless Hiero's hegemony in a way that quite overshadows any sensitive questions about whether Hiero has officially assumed the title of king or not or, indeed, about what any interested party thought of him at the moment. Political distinctions disappear in the powerful sense of restoration conveyed by the return of the traveller at twilight, of the cattle to their pens, of Odysseus to Ithaca, of the Syracusans to their land, and, implicitly, of the poet to his rightful place in society. The poet's journey is the last mentioned, and can there be any question that it should not happen?

When Theocritus responds to the intimidating presence of a mighty autocrat by repairing to the country, he leads a very large exodus. Poets from Virgil onward will concur that princes are most comfortably viewed from the shrubbery, where the "deus ille" runs less risk of ringing hollow. The Ptolemies, too, will hear their praises from the oddest places: from suburban streets (*Id.* 15), foreign drinking parties (*Id.* 14), Leto's womb (Callim., *Delos*), the occasional seashell (Callim., *Ep.* 5), and even the outland steadings of minor gods (Callim., *Apotheosis of Arsinoe*)—almost anyplace where the poet himself as an individual might not be found standing. I shall discuss this phenomenon in the next chapter, but it is worth noting here that already in Syracuse Theocritus recognizes the need for camouflage. Once it had been otherwise. From a common starting point Theocritus in *Id.* 16 and Pindar in *Pyth.* 1 go in quite opposite directions. The tribute to Hiero I concludes with a reminder that, just as Pindar sings of Cumae at Syracuse, he would celebrate the victory at Salamis for the Athenians and have his reward from the Spartans by recalling Plataea. The great deeds that Pindar regularly sings in other cities do not so much diminish the uniqueness of Hiero's victory as enhance the significance of the poet's presence here. Theocritus, on the other

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[77] See in general J. Kaerst, *Studien zur Entwicklung und theoretischen Begründung der Monarchie im Altertum* (Leipzig 1889), and W. Schubart, "Das Königsbild des Hellenismus," *Die Antike* 13 (1937) 272-88.

hand, works toward self-effacement as he bolsters his eulogy through reference to nature, history, the gods—anything but his own stature as poet.

The pattern of power-relationships in the poem reflects the new modesty of the poet's self-assertion. No more can prophet and king be equally preeminent in their incommensurable realms. As Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus* and Theocritus' *Encomium of Ptolemy* both clearly reflect, there is a single hierarchy with the king at the top. Yes, poets can still make the old claims to religious authority, but the blessings of the Muses and Apollo are much diminished in an age discovering Isis and Sarapis under the guidance of kings who have expropriated the religious establishment for their own uses, finally presiding over it not only as priests, but as gods. In *Id.* 16 Theocritus emphasizes his subservience to the Muses, as is usual, but in a way that transfers that submissiveness toward the patron as well. The journeys to the patron that begin and end the second part of the poem, the encomium (vv. 68 f. and 106 ff.), contain a wish for acceptance commonly by both the patron and the Muses or Charites. Servitude itself is ennobled and glamorized by its lush surroundings in the poem's final movement. The single mythic example of a good relationship to a king is that of Eumaeus and Philoetius, servants, to their master, Odysseus. Hiero's attainment depends on groups who stand in a subordinate position to him: soldiers, peasants, shepherds, and poets, who, coming last, may perhaps be set apart from the other groups. But the poets do come in a group, and Theocritus does not insist on their much-prized individuality. He formally claims to be but one of their number and not necessarily the most distinguished. What he gains by attenuating his self-assertion thus is a place in the natural order of things, safe and innocuous. 'May the furrows bear; may the spiders spin; may poets sing.' All that he has done is to implicate himself, quietly but firmly, in the inevitability of Hiero's own attainment, which itself has been projected into ineluctable natural cycles.

Theocritus has by this point long since veiled the awkwardness of his stance as petitioner. The gloominess of the opening argument —'Poetry or oblivion'—cannot carry forward into an atemporal prophecy. The poet still assures the patron's κλέος—not through time, but through space from Syracuse to Scythia and Babylon. The passage of time no longer sets classical and contemporary poetry into conflict, for now the modern poet does not compete

with the ghosts of Homer and Pindar, but simply continues their tradition. The final answer to the question. 'With Homer, do we need you?', comes when the poet, echoing the master, turns the taste for Homer to his own advantage by showing his poetry to be in some ways a renewal and extension of the epic cycle. Indeed, the poet of the *Odyssey*, because he is the creator of Eumaeus, can even be seen as licensing the pastoral, though it is a radical new departure in Greek literature. Having stopped talking about the great poets, Theocritus now quietly presumes to join them: Pindar, Euripides, Bacchylides, Theocritus—it all flows together. Once poetry had gone in search of patrons; now it waits with dignity to respond. And what poetry needs is not subventions, but subjects, great deeds to celebrate. In Theocritus' dream it is not Hiero's largesse that revivifies poetry but his ἀρετή.

The Valediction (vv. 104-9)

In his climactic sweep over the glories to come, Theocritus comes across himself, as if incidentally, in the crowd of poets speading Hiero's ὑψηλὸν . . . κλέος to the ends of the earth. Once the outcast, now he finds himself in good company. And despite all the modesty of his presentation, we may be reminded that κλέος . . . ὑψηλόν is precisely what Pindar promised and obviously procured for the first Hiero (*Pyth.* 3.111). The Charites, once humble working girls, now assume the celestial position which the Muses had at the first. The Muses, in turn, in accompanying Theocritus can most easily be taken as symbols of his poems, that is, what the Charites were at the start (see Meincke 71). The two sisterhoods are always more or less interchangeable, but their diametrical turnabout here suggests how completely Theocritus has transvalued poets from beggars to prophets. From this lofty elevation he can scarcely make a direct request for patronage. But need he? His needs are evident. The final espousal of a high-minded, purely aesthetic sense of vocation to the Charites as the principle of beauty in the universe need not entail, as some have thought, a turning aside from Hiero and abandonment of the petition. Pindar himself regularly ends on a high note without thereby forsaking his patrons.[78] In any case, service to the Muses or Charites and service to Hiero

[78] E.g. *Ol.* 1.115 f. and *Pyth.* 2.96, as pointed out by Perrotta, *SIFC* 4 (1925) 24.

have been more or less equivalent for some time now. Theocritus has mentioned no role for poetry other than the promulgation of some hero's κλέος. Indeed, even the terms of his address to the sisterhood indicate how much Hiero continues to occupy Theocritus' attention, for, in a final gesture to Pindar, Theocritus echoes his address to the sisterhood (*Ol.* 14.1 ff.) in terms specifically appropriate to Hiero (vv. 104 f.):

> ὦ Ἐτεόκλειοι Χάριτες θεαί, ὦ Μινύειον
> Ὀρχομενὸν φιλέοισαι ἀπεχθόμενόν ποτε Θήβαις, . . .

In their martial aspect as patronesses of Orchomenus at war with Thebes,[79] the Charites balance their role as providers of everything ἀγαπητόν. They represent thereby the double aspect of poetry as Theocritus has commended it to the regent, that is, the Iliadic and Odyssean; the celebration of war, but, no less, of the eventualities of peace. Even the pairing of Semiramis [80] and Eteocles bears an implicit message, for the two monarchs are founders in the two aspects that Theocritus would recommend to Hiero: Semiramis as the builder of Babylon, as Hiero of the new Syracuse; and Eteocles as the founder of the cult of the Charites and therefore the prototype for the patronage which Theocritus here enjoins on Hiero. As before, the echo of Pindar's words also calls to mind the precedent of Hiero I, who served admirably both as general and patron.

Theocritus performs a notable feat of rhetorical manipulation in resolving an impossible situation in the present—the clear unsuitability of poet and patron for one another—by leaping forward into a vision of the future. This we might call the argument from the future retrospect, a technique bearing what Deubner [81] notes as one of the hallmarks of *variatio*: namely, the increased reliance on future tense narrative. Past tense narration, after all, had been used too often already and too well. We find, therefore, in Hellenistic poets, a tendency to try to enliven storytelling by a projection into

79 On the cult, see Schwarzenberg, *Die Grazien* 7-11.

80 Clapp, *CP* 8 (1913) 313, suggests that Theocritus' reference to Babylon simply develops Pindar's image of the fame of the Aeginetans passing beyond the springs of the Nile and beyond the North Wind, so that there is no city so βάρβαρος that it has not heard of Peleus and Telamon. Here Theocritus would simply have provided a particular example of such a city.

81 *NJbb* 47 (1921) 365-68; cf. L. Hensel, *Weissagungen in der alexandrinischen Poesie* (diss. Giessen 1908).

the future, as in Lycophron's *Alexandra*, and occasionally in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, Callimachus' *Aetia* and *Bath of Pallas*. Theocritus may be the most ingenious of the lot, for paradoxically his leap into the future entails a projection back to the oldest myths, the once and future Golden Age. He will continue to be intrigued by the possibilities of an argument which simply assumes its request as granted and goes on from there. Lycidas in *Id.* 7 courts Ageanax's favor not by explicit solicitation, but by predicting a time after the favors have been granted when Ageanax will have smooth sailing and he himself can retire contentedly to a symposium.[62] Lycidas does not dwell on what exactly he desires, but it is most disarming to serve fiery passions by a vision of contentment and peace, as can also salve the most desolate moments: "forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit" (*Aen.* 1.203).

Yet the novelties of Hellenistic poetry are rarely anything that would have surprised Homer. Consider only what must be in Greek literature the first truly splendid triumph of rhetoric over reality, the appeal of a naked Odysseus to a startled Nausicaa (*Od.* 6.149-85). Odysseus, no less than Theocritus, must establish that he has a right to speak, even as he is advancing the appeal based on that right, for the canons of ξενία do not normally extend to creatures from the sea. Odysseus, like Theocritus, invokes the past to establish his respectability: "Once I saw the young shoot of a palm tree on Delos. . ." He was a general then, we learn, and honorably came to ruin. He is her equal. But even in his heyday he had the time to stop and admire the beauty of a palm, though it was not so beautiful as she. The anomalousness of the present moment can be alleviated by invoking the stabilities of the past and even more effectively by suggestions of the future. For the real focus of Odysseus' speech, as of Theocritus', is on the hearer's prospects: here, on Nausicaa's nubility, on the importance of ὁμοφροσύνη in a happy marriage. This means one thing to Nausicaa washing her trousseau and never before so interested in a man, but quite another to Odysseus, who as often is thinking of Penelope. Nausicaa takes the hint. However, that cooperation, wherever it may lead, can start at once. As in *Id.* 16, it is the prospect of an orderly relationship which can call the relationship into being at a moment when there may be little other basis for it. Like Odysseus, Theocritus has hinted at

[62] As J.-H Kühn, *Hermes* 86 (1958) 52, notes, the temporal aspect of Lycidas' song has been all but overlooked in the vast literature on this poem.

great things for the future, but *committed* himself to nothing. What would the next poem be? Pindar and Bacchylides always offer their clients more of the same. There cannot be another *Charites*. Hiero could request a mime, an epinician ode, a short epic—Theocritus has suggested himself as master of all these styles, while taking a variety of positions in the continuum that stretches from aesthete to propagandist. But nowhere does he hint what he intends for an encore: no reasonable request will be refused. He has left himself open to any response but "no."

Gazing off into the future with Theocritus, the audience is invited to overlook the brilliant duplicity of his final stance. He will wait politely to be called—but what has Hiero before him if not unsolicited praises? Theocritus admits dedication to nothing but the Charites for their own sake, *l'art pour l'art*; yet Hiero is all too obviously being invited to affront the purity of this art with monetary reward. When called, Theocritus will galvanize himself (θαρσήσας v. 107) for the high calling, but we have already seen his rise from despair to a sublime and energetic vision at the very mention of Hiero's name. Though Theocritus is actually making a private request, he leaves the sense rather of a grateful nation offering its thanks to Hiero. Perhaps the poem explains itself best in the pivotal *adynata* of waves impossible to count and bricks not to be cleaned, for it is a study in acknowledged impossibilities: an art that begins by admitting the death of art and then proceeds to conjure itself into existence. Such precisely is the Odyssean art of self-creation by which a naked stranger can talk his way into and out of becoming prince of Scheria. *Id.* 16 must argue defensively for the place of poetry and then blithely proceed as if sensible men could never have questioned the matter. Much of what the poet says before turning to Hiero he manages to unsay in the regent's presence. Hiero may have been persuaded or not, but the conjuration has worked and an impressive new style has established itself.

Having paid Theocritus the compliment of disbelieving what he says about poetry—at best a commonplace and snarled statement—and watching instead what he does, we might finally ask if the rest of the corpus corroborates this analysis of the kind of sensibility at work in *Id.* 16. Taken literally, the poem's pronouncements on poetry are indeed a dead end. The ancient truism that poetry confers immortality never seems to interest Theocritus again. If anything, he resists the notion of enduring κλέος. The hope for such

memorials forms the substance of the vainest sorts of lover's dreams (*Id.* 10.33-35 and *Id.* 12.12-21).[83] Heracles in the *Hylas* makes a lasting name for himself—as a λιποναύταν (v. 73).[84] Lycidas' admiration for Comatas does not provoke the desire to memorialize his hero, but to *meet* him and be with him (*Id.* 7.86-89). In the earthy world of the pastorals, κλέος seems arid and artificial, and poets sing not for eternity, but for prizes. The use of poetry is clearly the pleasure of the moment, and indeed the whole pastoral fiction is contrived to exclude time, death, and forgetfulness. Over against their antecedents in ἔπος, these little slices of life mark the poet's radical affirmation of ephemerality, as of slightness and simplicity. Doubtless he means his own work to endure, but he does not see fit to equip it with guarantees of its own durability. Theocritus also scarcely bothers to promise poetic immortality to the Ptolemies, though having made all Egypt their shrine and Olympus their home, they cannot have admitted much need for poets to snatch them from oblivion. One senses that as the poet of the passing moment Theocritus finds all designs on eternity a bit deadly. Nor will he openly proclaim the ponderous concept of art as its own justification. For critics and spokesmen about art he has chosen simple herdsmen and city dwellers who cannot follow aesthetic theory so far into the empyrean. He does frequently interest himself in aesthetics, but his mode of evaluation consists almost entirely—and delightfully—of the comparison of one artifact to another: song competing with song, cup exchanged for song (*Id.* 1), two narratives back to back (*Id.* 22). Unlike Callimachus, he is not much given to theorizing.[85] In reference to Theocritus, the slippery word "poetics" should normally be restricted to the sense of art as practised, not as explained.

As to the divine apparatus of Muses and Charites, I have argued elsewhere[86] that though Theocritus will haul them out again for Ptolemy (*Id.* 17.1), he has little use for them in his other poetry—

[83] For a view of the ironies of the latter passage, see G. Giangrande, "Theocritus' Twelfth and Fourth Idylls: A Study in Hellenistic Irony." *QUCC* 12 (1971) 95-113.

[84] Perhaps proverbial as one of the worst epithets to acquire, given Agamemnon's dread of it at Aesch. *Ag.* 212.

[85] Of the first rank of Alexandrian poets, Theocritus alone seems not to have written any critical work to parallel or defend his literary practice. See J. van Sickle, "Theocritus and the Development of the Conception of Bucolic Genre," *Ramus* 5 (1976) 18 f.

[86] "Theocritus' Silent Dioscuri", *GRBS* 17 (1976) 364-66.

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indeed, even seems to single out the overuse of this convention by Apollonius Rhodius as one of the weaknesses of his style. More telling clues to Theocritus' sense of divine consecration might be the nymphs who fail to show up for Daphnis' death and the choleric Pan, who will not let his herdsmen pipe. The way that the sisterhoods are turned inside out in *Id.* 16 suggests a certain lack of serious awe, and we should not be surprised that Theocritus invokes the sisterhood elsewhere only as an obsession of the over-earnest Simichidas in *Id.* 7 (vv. 12, 37, 92, 129, 137, 148, and 154).

On the other hand, I do believe that *Id.* 16 offers us a helpful profile of the formative influences on his verse. In arranging his predecessors so as to lead up to the pastoral, Theocritus reflects a clear and unsurprising sense of where his own art is going. Simonides, who seems to function here mostly as a foil for Pindar, has little apparent influence on the other *Idylls*, though, lacking his poetry, we cannot be secure in this judgment. Pindar will continue to exercise a very important influence, though as storyteller more than as eulogist (*Id.* 22 and 24). Most significantly, Theocritus' manipulation of Homer very directly anticipates Alexandrian practice. The reminder that Eumaeus, too, is Homeric sets the tone for the constant striving to be as Homerically un-Homeric as possible, to ferret out little-noticed passages of the monumental poems and adapt them in a way that is anti-heroic, but still authentically epic. Two of the most important "short epics" from this era, Callimachus' *Hecale* and the probably spurious *Id.* 25, will, in fact, take their inspiration from Odysseus' visit to Eumaeus. In Theocritus' own *Thalysia* the theme of poetic initiation is likewise closely bound up with motifs derived from the Ithacan passages of the *Odyssey*.[87] Could it be, then, that the invocation of Hesiod may not have been the only or, perhaps, even the primary defense against the powerful expectation that poets follow Homer on the high road to epic? The *Odyssey* itself, especially the rural and domestic scenes of Odysseus' return, may have served admirably as a counterpoise to the *Iliad*'s imposing and inimitable celebration of heroism. When Theocritus needs an epic background for Ptolemaic myths (e.g. in *Idd.* 18 and 24), he works directly from the *Odyssey*.

The Charites is most instructive, however, in revealing how a difficult rhetorical situation leads Theocritus to the construction of

[87] U. Ott, "Theokrits 'Thalysien' und ihre literarischen Vorbilder," *RhM* n.s. 115 (1972) 134-49.

an argument in which an extraordinary mixture of styles and genres allows him to contradict himself gracefully and persuasively. Things were not to be much easier for poets at the Ptolemaic court, nor their poems much simpler. A *laudandus* like Hiero who is not yet a patron is troublesome, to be sure—but what of patrons who are not yet gods? For every problem that the Ptolemies as patrons solved for Theocritus, they created another. They could claim a distinguished line—which they consolidated with incest. Their secure and glorious station on earth needed little glamorization, but that was not what they wanted to hear about. They seem instead to have sent their poets out, for the most part, to validate their claims on Olympus. If it is difficult to hail Hiero as Achilles and keep from laughing, what of Ptolemy and Arsinoe as Zeus and Hera? In the depths of his despair at the start of *Id.* 16, Theocritus had the consolation that at least he did not have to write a hymn. But what else was there to write for the living gods? Moreover, the very support that the Ptolemies so generously gave to the poet could rob him of his last vestige of independent standing in the community, of authority to speak for himself. The king presided over every facet of political, religious, and now cultural life. The very presence of the vast and expensive new libraries might argue poets less the bearers of a magnificent tradition than its curators. All considered, the public voice of the poet may have been harder to recreate in Alexandria than it had been in Syracuse. Callimachus must be right: the poet must learn the song of the cicada, a clear and lovely tone emanating from an invisible source. In the society at large the poet no longer really fitted anywhere, or at least anywhere important. In the courtly poems of Alexandria, no less than in *Id.* 16, we find a poetry of evasion full of startling turns, dazzling ποικιλία, and the assumption of many different poetic voices which combine to leave the poet's own vantage point irretrievably hidden. It will continue to be the art of Proteus, that is, an art of metamorphosis and escape.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NEW GODS

By 273 or so, Theocritus found himself at the court of Ptolemy II, later to be called Philadelphus.[1] Whether it was his first contact with the East we cannot say, nor how long he stayed. However, the *Idylls* reflect the influence of Ptolemaic literary circles with sufficient frequency to suggest Alexandria or Cos as the site of his most productive period.[2] Theocritus pays homage to Philadelphus' tutor, Philetas of Cos (*Id.* 7.40), and seems to a majority of scholars to have been provoked into handling Argonautic myths in the *Hylas* and the *Hymn to the Dioscuri* by Apollonius Rhodius' controversial experiments in the ἄεισμα διηνεκές.[3] Callimachus' tribute to Philadelphus in his hymns to Zeus and Delos similarly finds distinct echoes in Theocritus' *Ptolemy*.[4] And in the linkage of a comic scene of a divine infancy with a didactic catalogue, the *Heracliscus* and Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis* are clearly twins, though it may be disputed which is the elder.

The influence of the Ptolemies themselves remains less clear, apart from the four poems openly addressed to them (*Idd.* 14, 15, 17, and the *Berenice*). Theocritus' tributes fall into two distinct classes, and it will be convenient to discuss them separately. In *Aeschinas and Thyonicus* and *The Adoniazusae* he adapts a distinctively Sicilian form, the mime, to suggest in broad terms what might be the relationship of sovereign to subject in the new order. These mimes will be the subject of Chapter Four. More frequently he seems to have joined the conspiracy to insinuate the Ptolemies into the ranks of the Olympians by a subtle manipulation of traditional

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[1] The evidence for dating is gathered by Gow, I. xvii-xxii, II. 305-7 and 326.

[2] Even the pastorals, though set mostly in the West (if ambiguously so; see Gow I.xx n. 1), reflect through their very carefully observed flora a knowledge of botany to be acquired probably only in the East. See A. Lindsell, "Was Theocritus a Botanist?" *GR* 6 (1937) 78-93.

[3] Work on the question is surveyed by A. Köhnken, *Apollonios Rhodios und Theokrit* (Hypomnemata 12; Göttingen 1965) 26-31, who, however, presents the fullest case for the reverse direction of influence.

[4] On the relationship between the two poets, see G. Schlatter, *Theokrit und Kallimachos* (diss. Zürich 1941).

mythology. The question of just how frequently remains disputed, and we must, therefore, turn first to the mythological poems to determine the extent to which they parallel and support the Ptolemies' attempts to identify themselves with their newly acquired divine ancestors and partners in cult. In this chapter I shall discuss the divine apparatus of the *Ptolemy*; the Adonis hymn of *The Adoniazusae* (leaving the framing mime until the next chapter); and the suspected, but unproven courtly contexts of the *Epithalamium for Helen*, the *Heracliscus*, and *The Bacchantes*.

These are the only five extant *Idylls* which may or clearly do treat the favored myths of the court,[5] and they have never been analyzed as a group, as of course must be done if we are to decide whether to include or extrude the three doubtful cases. This is, however, not the first time that these five poems have been grouped together, for they stand as a series at the end of the B gathering (quire?) of the Antinoe papyrus (fifth or sixth century). Though this collection antedates our earliest manuscripts by six centuries, contains no spurious poems, and agrees with the other papyri against the manuscripts in putting *Id.* 7 after *Id.* 5, its order, like that of the archetype of the manuscripts, is usually attributed to hazard or scribal taste. The sequence in the B gathering in particular has been dismissed as a puzzle not worth solving: *Idd.* 10, 14, 13, 12, 2, 18, 15, 26, 24, 17. Hunt's reservations in the *editio princeps*[6] are typical: "It is difficult to suggest a reason why the Ἑλένης Ἐπιθαλάμιος should have been sandwiched between the Φαρμακεύτριαι and the Ἀδωνιάζουσαι, or why the encomium on Ptolemy Philadelphus [*Id.* 17] should follow the *Heracliscus*. . ." Gow (I.lxix) adds that the Ptolemaic poems (*Id.* 15 and *Id.* 17) should hardly be separated.[7] But are the Ptolemaic poems separated? The interloper

[5] Of Theocritus' *Berenice* we have only a small and cryptic fragment from Athenaeus 284a. The *Hymn to the Dioscuri* remains a doubtful case, since the twins seem to have figured in Ptolemaic myth, if for the most part only in connection with their sister Helen. See Wilam., *Textg.* 183 n. 2; Visser 17 f. and 83 f.; A. S. F. Gow, "The Twenty-second Idyll of Theocritus," *CR* 56 (1942) 17 n. 3; Fraser I. 207; and D. B. Thompson, *Ptolemaic Oinochoai and Portraits in Faience* (Oxford 1973) 66 f. However, possible allusion to the royal cults cannot in any case extend beyond the prelude, especially as the twins descend to barbarity in the second episode. The poem is probably best explained as a purely literary exercise, as I have discussed elsewhere "Theocritus' Silent Dioscuri," *GRBS* 17 (1976) 353-67.

[6] *Two Theocritus Papyri*, ed. A. S. Hunt and J. Johnson (London 1930) 23

[7] Cf. also C. Gallavotti, review of Hunt and Jackson, *RFIC* 58 (1930) 499; and *Theocritus*[a] (Rome 1955) xvii-xix.

Idylls, The Bacchantes and the *Heracliscus*, have long been suspected as Ptolemaic, the latter by Gow himself.[8] Heracles, after all, had been officially included among the royal ancestors well before Theocritus arrived in Alexandria, and Dionysus was in the process of being adopted.[9] Even the suspiciously innocent and clearly divine Helen of the neighboring *Id.* 18 herself regularly serves in Theocritus and Callimachus as an analogue for Arsinoe Philadelphus (see below, pp. 88 f.). Apart from the Ptolemaic myths, there seem to be no other conspicuous features of subject, dialect, or form to account for the grouping of the five poems. Furthermore, the preceding five *Idylls*, non-bucolic treatments of love, suggest that more lies behind the ordering than mere whim: two poems on heterosexual love (*Idd.* 10 and 14, both dialogues between the lover and the *irrisor amoris*); two pederastic poems (*Idd.* 13 and 12); and, predictably last, the woman's viewpoint (*Id.* 2), making a suitable transition to the maidens' epithalamium in *Id.* 18. In all, the papyrus shows enough sense or authority in ordering the *Idylls* to warrant investigation of the possibility that it suggests to us: namely, that the five *Idylls* are gathered together because of some original connection with the Alexandrian court.

Before examining each of these poems by itself, it may be profitable to consider a little more closely what they have in common. Though the five begin in a variety of forms (narrative, mime, epithalamium, encomium), all end with a shift into hymnic style and a formal χαιρέτισμα of their subjects. The *laudandi* are all prominent fixtures of the Ptolemaic pantheon (Helen, Adonis, Dionysus, Heracles, as well as Ptolemy II himself) and all depicted in the process of rising above their mortal origins, usually taking a good part of their families with them (Menelaus, Berenice, Ptolemy I, Semele and her sisters, Alcmena, Arsinoe). Heracles

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[8] On *Id.* 18, see K. Kuiper, "De Theocriti carmine XVIII," *Mnemosyne* n.s. 49 (1921) 226 f.; A. S. F. Gow, "Philology in Theocritus," *CQ* 34 (1940) 116 and again II. 348; and M. Sanchez-Wildberger, *Theokrit-Interpretationen* (diss. Zürich 1955) 39 f. On *Id.* 24, see Gow II. 416-19.

[9] Dionysus does not appear in the ancestral portrait gallery (*Id.* 17.13-33; cf. Wilam., *Textg.* 153 n. 1), but a connection was perhaps suggested by Philadelphus in including the images of Alexander and Ptolemy I in the Dionysus procession described by Callixenus (*apud* Ath. 201d). The adoption was certainly complete by the time of Ptolemy III (cf. the genealogy traced by Satyrus [Theophilus, *Ad Autol.* 2.7 = *FGH* 631 fr. 1, on which see Fraser II 120 f.]), if not before, as is suggested by W. Otto, *Priester und Tempel im hellenistischen Ägypten* II (Leipzig and Berlin 1908) 266 n. 2.

(*Id.* 24) and Helen (*Id.* 18) spent their youth in surroundings remarkably like a Hellenistic court, but end their poems with the status of gods; so, exactly, does Ptolemy (*Id.* 17), whose birth in any case had been very much like those of Dionysus (*Id.* 26) and Apollo (*Id.* 17.56-73 and Callim. *Del.* 160-95). The paternity of Zeus in each case emerges only gradually as the poem progresses (*Idd.* 17, 18, 24, 26), and, of course, it is on the basis of this gradual apotheosis that the style rises to the mode of hymn, a form reserved for the gods (so *Id.* 17.8).[10] On this new Alexandrian Olympus, marriage is normally incestuous: Zeus and Hera (*Idd.* 15 and 17), Heracles and Hebe (*Idd.* 17 and 24), Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II (*Id.* 17). Maternal descent gains a striking new prominence throughout (Alcmena, Helen, Semele), but then the royal family had its best blood through Lagus' wife Arsinoe,[11] and Philadelphus' mother Berenice quite overshadows her husband in *Idd.* 15 and 17—possibly as Philadelphus' best claim to preferment over Soter's older sons by Eurydice, possibly as a model for her formidable daughter, Arsinoe Philadelphus. Most tellingly, in all five poems the passage to godhead for these ambiguous natures hinges on a sacred union, a ἱερὸς γάμος, such as that on which Ptolemy II and Arsinoe based their self-deification *as a couple*, calling themselves the Theoi Adelphoi and conferring equal honor on their parents' marriage.

Of human societies Philadelphus' court is one of the strangest, but the world which Theocritus creates around the myths of Helen, Adonis, Heracles, and Dionysus fits it like an upper story. Though the concerns of these demigods are precisely those of the court in the mid-to-late-seventies, when Theocritus would have been writing, they are not the kind of themes to which he naturally gravitates elsewhere. Look for incest, apotheosis, powerful women, or even (almost) marriage elsewhere in the *Idylls* and you will scarcely find them. This cluster of issues characterizes only these five poems and all of them uniformly. To find the source of these themes we must look beyond the *Idylls* to the work of other eulogists and to the *Religionspolitik* which the Ptolemies were carrying to every street corner in Alexandria.

[10] See G. Fraustadt, *Encomiorum in litteris Graecis usque ad Romanam aetatem historia* (diss. Leipzig 1909) 8-13, and H. Färber, *Die Lyrik in der Kunsttheorie der Antike* (Munich 1936) I. 46-48 and II. 26-29.

[11] Either because Ptolemy I's mother Arsinoe attached the house to the Argeadae through her great-grandfather Amyntas I or through the fabrication alluded to by Callicrates that she had borne Soter to Philip and not Lagus. See below, pp. 62 f..

work on the occasion of the *Helen*, the *Heracliscus*, and *The Bacchantes* has treated them only separately and without regard to the striking regularities which link them to one another and to the poems openly addressed to the Ptolemies. *Idd.* 18 and 24 have provoked only an occasional suspicion, while, at the opposite extreme, searchers for allegory have wrung some remarkably precise messages from *Id.* 26, taking it variously as an accompaniment for or incitement to religious initiation,[12] child-sacrifice,[13] political purges,[14] cannibalism,[15] or the opening of a chic new temple.[16] As often in Hellenistic poetry, the temptation is obvious to assume a strict and simple system of one-to-one correspondences between myth and politics, to pursue this through to a particular historical moment, and sometimes even to write history from it—always with sorry results. But the parallels that I have surveyed and shall substantiate below suggest a much different approach. Menelaus' red hair (*Id.* 18.1) may indeed be Ptolemy's (*Id.* 17.103) and Heracles (*Id.* 24.11 f.) may share the royal birthday (see Gow II. 417-19), but such connections are clearly of secondary importance and for us never certain. More important is the constellation of myths, all of only partial appropriateness, which combine to support the monarchs on certain sensitive issues: incest, the dynastic cult, Philadelphus' right to the throne, and perhaps also the Ptolemies' program of religious syncretism. The mythic world constructed around Helen, Heracles, and Adonis does not in any immediate way exalt the patrons to the skies. That they had already done for themselves in dedicating the cities, nomes, shrines, festivals, and even streets of Egypt [17] to themselves. The purveyors of the

[12] J. M. Edmonds, *The Greek Bucolic Poets* (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Mass., and London 1912; reprinted 1960) 325.

[13] R. J. Cholmeley, *The Idylls of Theocritus*[2] (London 1919) 364 and 409, and T. B. L. Webster, *Hellenistic Poetry and Art* (London 1964) 87.

[14] For example, of the child Ptolemy III; so Ph.-E. Legrand, "Sur la date de quelques poèmes de Théocrite et de Callimaque," *REG* 7 (1894) 277. Wilamowitz (*Textg.* 213 f.) entertains this possibility, but insists on the insufficiency of the evidence.

[15] R. Reitzenstein, *Epigramm und Skolion* (Giessen 1893) 217.

[16] Suggested in passing by K. J. McKay, "Theokritos' *Bacchantes* Re-examined," *Antichthon* 1 (1967) 25 f., to whom the composition of the two scenes in the *Idyll* suggests an *ecphrasis*, perhaps of a temple fresco.

[17] For the Ptolemies' cultural and religious program, Fraser's excellent survey, "Religious Life" (I.189-301), will be assumed in what follows. For earlier work on the subject, see also J. Tondriau, "Bibliographie du culte des souverains hellénistiques et romains," *Bull. Assoc. G. Budé* n.s. 5 (1948) 106-25, and Cerfaux-Tondriau 36-43.

ἔπος τυτθόν were clearly not destined to create the regime's most imposing monuments. But they did have delight and respectability to offer. They built, it seems, an appropriate mythic background for the monarchs out of words and myths remembered from Homer, Sappho, and Pindar—the best sort of poetry. The very fact that these tributes were by design slight, lapidary, and informed by a magisterial command of the classical tradition endowed them with the one cultural attribute doubtless in shortest supply in the Ptolemies' built-to-order capital: authenticity. And though indisputably Greek, the poetic world imagined by these writers was a heroic ambience where the Ptolemies, for all their pharaonic behavior, could feel comfortable, for here manners outweighed valor and the primordial barriers between god and man, brother and sister were gently relaxed. Conventional encomium works to present the *laudandus* as preeminent, as hardly needed saying for the overlords of Egypt. More to the point was a system of myths to make them look normal.

As in *The Charites* Theocritus' eulogistic strategy in these poems is to make the background so rich, so full of implications gratifying to the *laudandus*, that he need say little directly about the man himself or his mythological analogues. We see much of Philadelphus' deified ancestors in the *Ptolemy* and much of his uniquely favored realm, but little more of the man himself than of Hiero in *The Charites*. Arsinoe in *The Adoniazusae* nowhere appears in the festival which she has arranged, nor does Dionysus in the rites which he institutes in *The Bacchantes*. Helen remains behind closed doors in *Id.* 18, and in *Id.* 24 the young Heracles is scarcely to be seen for the throng of his parents and tutors. It is tolerably strange for so many poems to avoid their own heroes so energetically, but a reason is not far to seek. Theocritus does not deal in portraits, but rather in historical (*Idd.* 15 and 17) and mythological landscapes (*Idd.* 18, 24, and 26) where the patrons may feel themselves welcome —less a matter of uplifting the monarchs than lowering Olympus.[18] Just as in Syracuse he suggested a heartening new myth of history for Hiero, now in Alexandria Theocritus, along with Callimachus and other poets, assents to the new sense of theogony. The tradi-

[18] The poets, of course, were not alone in this project, since they had the collaboration (or perhaps competition) of the Euhemerists and, it would seem, the Ptolemies themselves, who in some loyalty oaths did not scruple to bring Zeus himself down to their own level. See Fraser I.194.

tional favorites—Aphrodite, Heracles, and Helen—return now in ordinary circumstances, or at least what would seem in a Hellenistic court like ordinary circumstances. The trappings of this mythic world are ancient and familiar, but in the interval Aphrodite and Helen have learned chastity; Heracles, manners; and Dionysus, justice. Religious piety could account for the change—but I doubt that many readers of Theocritus will be satisfied with that explanation. And when the cornerstone of this new respectability is the blushing innocence of consanguineous marriage, we can appreciate how the maker of myths in Alexandria, even when he is talking of other matters, must always keep one eye on the way that the monarchs are behaving themselves. If the Ptolemies are to make it onto Olympus in these poems, they must as listeners do so on the strength of their own imaginative energy. Theocritus does not assert that Arsinoe *is* Helen, nor Philadelphus Heracles. But in hearing these poems, the patrons should find it remarkably easy to think of themselves in those terms, just as Hiero, in hearing *The Charites*, could savor in advance the gratifications of being savior of Syracuse. The extent to which the court may be said to be the true *subject* of the mythological poems will remain a matter of interpretation, and I shall offer my suggestions. But what can solidly be established, I submit, is the extent to which Theocritus has anticipated and indulged the interests of the court as an audience.

As with *The Charites*, it may be helpful to consider in advance the nature of the audience that the poet was addressing. Only Theocritus' *Ptolemy* seems to be the kind of official art which would be accessible to the general audience of Greeks. If attached to Callimachus' *Aetia*, the *Lock of Berenice* and now the *Victory of Berenice* [19] would address the reading public; but the audience for such learned poetry can never have been very large. The *Heracliscus*, if intended for competition at one of the festivals, as is suggested by its tattered conclusion in the Antinoe papyrus, would assume an audience of comparable refinement, and the erudition of its concluding catalogue of tutors would be excessively heavy going for

[19] This title was proposed by P. Parsons, "Callimachus: Victoria Berenices," *ZPE* 25 (1977) 44, for the four fragments of papyrus first published by C. Meillier, *Cahiers de recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille* 4 (1976) 257-360. For Parsons' suggestion that the text is a proem for the second two books of the *Aetia*, see pp. 46-50.

anyone else. And as a wry portrait of how the royal house courts the favor of the mob through well-staged festivals, *The Adoniazusae* could hardly be less suitable for public consumption. The Adonis hymn which Theocritus there recreates, presumably with some fidelity to what the general public actually heard at such gatherings, is a polished performance, but conspicuously lacks the wit and evasiveness of the other courtly poems (apart from the *Ptolemy*). A second, and perhaps even more telling, indication of the style of Ptolemaic public art may be found in the wild Dionysiac extravagance of Philadelphus' Pompe through the streets of Alexandria as described by Callixenus (*apud* Ath. 196-203). Here we find a dawn to dusk procession of, among other things, gold-crowned Satyrs, winged Victories, tragic actors, more Satyrs, Dionysuses, tripods, floats with mechanical figures, more Satyrs, Silenuses, Priapuses, dancing girls, the world's largest wineskin, a silver mixing bowl with six thousand gallons in a cart drawn by six hundred men, elephants, gazelles, ostriches, antelopes, captives, camels, Satyrs, mixing bowls, black Africans, parrots, pheasants, and various large and gilded apparatuses which suggested Philadelphus as the father of his country. One wonders if the attendant throngs would ever have much time for Callimachus' and Theocritus' few subtle thoughts on monarchy.[20]

We are not, therefore, dealing with official art of the usual sort or really even with propaganda: the poet speaks to the convinced and to those who stand to profit from the success of these myths. Nor do the Ptolemies, prolific of ancestors as they finally proved themselves, seem to have left it to their poets to think up flattering new divine comparisons and identifications for them. The gods of the courtly verse—Zeus, Hera, Heracles, Dionysus, Persephone, the Theoi Soteres—are all there by royal invitation, as is indicated by our knowledge of the cults supported by the crown. Helen alone may be only a poetic conceit, and she is but a temporary measure until Arsinoe's full assimilation to Aphrodite. Since these associations of monarch and myth are already made in the minds of at least some of his audience, the poet need perhaps do no more than tell the myths in a way that does not exclude that association and that accommodates the values and tastes of that audience. Singing of Zeus (Callim. *Jov.*), the poet may omit

[20] For a bibliography of studies of the Pompe, see Cerfaux-Tondriau 203 n. 2.

cloud gathering, bolt hurling, and countless adulteries. Topics like the accession of youngest sons to the throne and the unrivaled supremacy of kings, be they of gods or men, will be of special interest to those inclined to see in the current Ptolemy more than a little of the blood of his first ancestor. Arsinoe in her mid-forties may not look much like Helen at sixteen (*Id.* 18), but there is much to be discussed that all strong and regal women have in common. The various parts of the audience may take these connections as far as they care to.

Because a finite system of symbols were being used to promote a limited and predictable set of messages about the Ptolemies, the symbolism could be employed with great economy. Pausanias (9.31.1) reports to us that in the Valley of the Muses Philadelphus had memorialized his great queen by a statue which left her perched for all eternity on a στρουθός, to Pausanias perhaps an ostrich, but doubtless to an earlier generation a phoenix.[21] Though this fragile symbolism had faded already in antiquity, to the Alexandrians it would have been a commonplace. In the *Lock of Berenice* Callimachus shows the dead queen borne off on what Catullus calls an "ales equos," apparently Zephyrus conceived of as ἵππος (fr. 110.54 Pf.) and hence, like Pegasus, part of that band of commuters between heaven and earth which includes Ptolemaic cult favorites like Osiris, the Dioscuri (*Id.* 22), and Adonis ('who alone visits both earth and Acheron' *Id.* 15.136 f.). Zephyrus has his own mortal connections: γνωτὸς Μέμνονος Αἰθίοπος (v. 52). Clearly these symbols all make more or less the same point: for certain privileged natures death is not the only exit from this mortal life. Such consistent images can, of course, be used quite allusively. The scholiast at v. 45 of Callimachus' *Apotheosis of Arsinoe*, for instance, seems to have had no trouble deducing that Philotera, the deceased sister of the Theoi Adelphoi, just happened to be en route from Enna because that Sicilian city was the site of the rape of Core. Now, Core might well have her own niche in Ptolemaic myth, since her ἁρπαγή anticipated that of Arsinoe (by the Dioscuri,

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[21] See D. B. Thompson, "A Portrait of Arsinoe Philadelphos," *AJA* 59 (1955) 200 f. She suggests also that the reported appearance of the phoenix in the reign of Philadelphus may have been linked in popular tradition with the apotheosis of Arsinoe. On Arsinoe herself, see R. Pfeiffer, "Arsinoe Philadelphos in der Dichtung," *Die Antike* 2 (1926) 161-74; and G. Longega, *Arsinoe II* (Univ. di Padova Pubbl. Ist. di Storia Antica 6; Rome 1968).

Dieg. X. 11 f.), as previously of her mother (*Id.* 17.48-50),[22] and her fecundating return paralleled the generativity celebrated by the Ptolemies in the double cornucopia or even the Priapus who accompanied Soter in the Pompe through the streets of Alexandria (Callixenus *apud* Ath. 201c). But the reference to Enna can stand without explanation in Callimachus' lament. Perhaps the equally brief invocations of Persephone and Core by Theocritus' and Herodas' women (*Id.* 15.94 and *Mime* 1.32) in connection with the Ptolemies should be thought to have an appropriateness similarly self-evident to this audience.[23] The Alexandrian audience doubtless had come to expect that the symbols used in association with the Ptolemies, from the ram's horn on their portraits [24] to the Olympian landscape in the poems written for or about them, would normally serve to project them beyond the mortal state and needed no gloss.[25]

This larger context affects our reading of the *Idylls* in a very material way. The delicate image of Iris that concludes the *Ptolemy* is not, I think, merely ornamental, but would be for this audience a typical enough part of the Olympian shuttle (like the Dioscuri, Adonis, and her husband, Zephyrus) to add a certain symbolic weight.[26] The comparison of the marriage of the Theoi Adelphoi

[22] On the passage, see R. Pfeiffer, *Kallimachosstudien* (Munich 1922) 30-37. On the cult of Core, see Visser 37 and 92; on the Ptolemaic penchant for deification "par enlèvement," see Cerfaux-Tondriau 199 f. and U. Wilcken, *Zur Entstehung des hellenistischen Königskultes* (SBBerl, phil.-hist. Kl. 28; Berlin 1938) 313.

[23] For a similar case of highly economical symbolism, compare the gold-crowned figure of the city of Corinth, which accompanied the statues of Alexander and Soter in Philadelphus' Pompe (Ath. 201d). W. W. Tarn, *Antigonos Gonatas* (Oxford 1913) 371, takes this to be a self-explanatory symbol of the Ptolemaic hopes of leading a reconstituted Corinthian League and assuming thereby the leadership of the Greek world.

[24] Possibly linking Arsinoe with Mendes, but more probably with Ammon, to whose cult she seems to have given special support. See J. G. Milne, "Arsinoe and Ammon," in *Studies Presented to F. Ll. Griffith* (London 1932) 13-15; and S. Sauneron, "Un Document égyptien relatif à la divinisation de la reine Arsinoé II," *BIFAO* 60 (1960) 103-4.

[25] That art and literature operate in tandem in praising the monarchs is indicated, for example, by the fact that in *Id.* 17 Theocritus equips Alexander only with the headdress and Heracles with the club which were used in statues of Philadelphus to identify the king with his heroic relatives. See C. C. Edgar, "Two Bronze Portraits from Egypt," *JHS* 26 (1906) 281 f. Could this scene be an *ecphrasis* of the symposia depicted in the recesses of the walls of Philadelphus' pavilion reported by Callixenus *apud* Ath. 196f-197a?

[26] That the several demigods were closely linked in the popular imagination

to that of Zeus and Hera (*Id.* 17.131-34) has not won Theocritus any admirers. "Blasphemous and sycophantic," complains Gow (II.346). But the analogy was already a commonplace on the day of the wedding (Plut. *Mor.* 736e-f). Surely the monarchs themselves put it about.[27] And when we compare its use in an epithalamium for the marriage (*PLondon Lit.* 60, recto; Posidippus?),[28] we can only admire how quickly and gracefully Theocritus has slipped past this possibly obligatory gesture. Throughout the *Ptolemy* he has, as we shall see, sedulously prepared the themes of filial piety and redemptive chastity to whitewash this, Arsinoe's third and incestuous marriage. But as presented, the comparison to Zeus and Hera does not draw things together very clearly. The papyrus of the epithalamium suggests, however, that the pertinent connotations of the image may have had sufficient currency elsewhere: namely, that the bride was Hera Parthenos, whose virginity was renewed by her union with her brother. Furthermore, in the tradition after Homer, and most notably in Pindar's Theban *Hymn to Zeus*, the marriage was also taken to be Zeus' final act in consolidating his hegemony;[29] so might it seem for Philadelphus as well, for only with the advent of Arsinoe did the dynasty become full and complete. It may be to underscore this possibility that Theocritus links the marriage to the dynastic cult. But, again, the extent to which the *Ptolemy* is tracing out the process of Phila-

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is suggested by an Alexandrian dedication to Adonis, the Dioscuri, and Soter (*Sammelbuch* 306 = *SEG* XXIV. 1174).

L. Koenen, "ΘΕΟΙΣΙΝ ΕΧΘΡΟΣ, Ein einheimischer Gegenkönig in Ägypten," *Cd'E* 34 (1959) 110 f., suggests a similar implicit association of Philadelphus with Sarapis in Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos*, where Apollo (vv. 171 ff.) describes as a ξυνὸς ἄεθλος Ptolemy's vanquishing of the mutinous Gauls, the ὀψίγονοι Τιτῆνες. The Titanomachy, of course, belongs to Zeus; but an audience familiar with the Ptolemaic Sarapis, who subsumes both Apollo and Zeus, would feel no inconcinnity and could see an additional precedent for Ptolemy's victory in Apollo's slaying of the Python at Delphi, itself an analogue for Horos' (= Apollo, Ptolemy) slaying Seth-Typhon with the lightning of Zeus.

[27] So F. Taeger, *Charisma* I (Stuttgart 1957) 376.

[28] = *PPetrie* ii. 49a (Pack[2] 1593), on which see F. Lasserre, "Aux Origines de l'Anthologie: 1. le papyrus P. Brit. Mus. Inv. 589 (Pack 1121)," *RhM* n.s. 102 (1959) 222-47; and Fraser II. 937 n. 407. For Philadelphus with the attributes of Zeus on coinage, see J. Tondriau, "Rois lagides comparés ou identifiés à des divinités," *Cd'E* 23 (1948) 130; for Arsinoe assimilated to Hera Teleia (patroness of marriage) and Hera Basileia, see H. I. Bell, "Notes on Early Ptolemaic Papyri," *ArchP* 7 (1924) 21-23.

[29] See Wilamowitz, *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 189-92, and B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, trans. T. Rosenmeyer (Oxford 1953) 77-79.

delphus' coming to power in terms analogous to Zeus' triumph would be fully clear only to an audience conversant with the other poetry of the court, in this case with one of the models for *Id.* 17, Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus*, which explicitly deals with Zeus' accession to his father's throne and implicitly thereby with Philadelphus' accession as well. Theocritus can perhaps link the careers of Zeus and Ptolemy as casually as he does because he is writing in the shadow of a poem, Callimachus' hymn, where the parallels are so thoroughly explored. The brief and spare image of the ἱερὸς γάμος can draw together the many strands, personal and political, of the encomium only because the essential associations of the image were already known and perfected in other courtly verse.

We must deal, then, with sometimes cryptic symbols, but symbols used in multiples and used with striking consistency. It is the pattern of images, the larger systems focused on a few sensitive themes, which count far more than the particulars. We must not, therefore, be thrown off the track when at certain moments analogies go askew. To take an instance from Soter's court,[30] Callicrates, as Euphantus tells us (*apud* Ath. 251d), was the cleverest of flatterers, for he wore a ring with the figure of Odysseus and named his daughter Anticlea. We may be mystified, but Soter was presumably clever enough to recall the post-Homeric legend that the grandfather of Odysseus, Autolycus, had given his daughter Anticlea to Sisyphus before betrothing her to Odysseus' ostensible father Laertes, who was left to rear another man's child. Autolycus, wily as he was, recognized in Sisyphus a man yet more so, and the son born of his union with Anticlea, Odysseus, became the cleverest of all. A contemporary analogy was close at hand: Soter's mother Arsinoe was said to have been the mistress of Philip II before marrying Lagus. Callicrates' implication is that Philip II, not Lagus, must be Soter's true father, whereby Soter gains a much-needed link to the Macedonian royalty, Alexander as a brother, and a compliment for surpassing his real father Philip II as Odysseus had Sisyphus. The individual correspondences—to

[30] Explained by W. W. Tarn, "Two Notes on Ptolemaic History," *JHS* 53 (1933) 57-61. The story was never officially accepted and was completely discarded by the time of Ptolemy II. C. F. Edson Jr., "The Antigonids, Heracles, and Beroea," *HSCP* 45 (1934) 222 n. 3 and 224 n. 2, argues that the liaison was chronologically impossible in any case and that the story was fabricated only to provide a closer link to the Argeadae than that of Arsinoe to her great-grandfather Amyntas I.

Sisyphus, the treacherous Autolycus, or the illicit liaison—would not ingratiate Callicrates with the king; even calling Soter a new Odysseus is at best a left-handed compliment. But the overall pattern does cunningly address an issue of immediate interest.

The poets, of course, proceed with even greater indirection, and nowhere more brilliantly than in Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus*, perhaps the earliest of the laureate verse that we have.[31] As the poem progresses, Zeus is reshaped in the image of Philadelphus, until by the end the celebration of the god can be heard also as a hymn to the king, who, of course, would be the one to grant the young poet's final petition for ὄλβος and who might reflexively understand ὦ ἄνα (formally addressed to Zeus in v. 8) differently than would the other listeners. The equation of the monarch with Zeus had been commonplace for many years,[32] but Callimachus does not pursue it in any simple or consistent way.[33] Zeus, as Ptolemy's overlord (vv. 79-84) cannot be the king himself and may elsewhere figure Soter instead. Again, issues may be more crucial than personalities: Zeus' elder siblings had yielded to the last-born as Philadelphus' had (or should have).[34] The precedent of Zeus' distance from his underlings makes Ptolemy's supreme monarchy seem natural and right. Callimachus may even be preparing the way for Philadelphus' self-deification, in much the way that Theocritus does, by minor adjustments on the periphery of the mythic world here created. In the classical tradition which Callimachus so broadly evokes, especially Homer and Hesiod, the gap between men and gods was vast and unbridgeable. Callimachus will not go so far as the Euhemerists do in saying that the gods were never more than kings like Ptolemy, glorified in retrospect. But he does present a mythic world where the limits of divinity

[31] Work on this hymn is surveyed by H. Herter, "Bericht über die Literatur zur hellenistischen Dichtung aus den Jahren 1921-1935." in Bursian's *Jahresb* 255 (1937) 195 f; and most recently in *RE* Supp. 13 (1973) s.v. *Kallimachos* coll. 232 f. See also Meincke 165-82.

[32] Tondriau, *Cd'E* 23 (1948) 128 f.

[33] The variability of the correspondences is well discussed by K. J. McKay, *The Poet at Play* (*Mnemosyne* Supplementum 6; Leiden 1962) 12-15. On the question of political allusion in the poem, see most recently J. Carrière, "Philadelphe ou Sôtêr? À propos d'un hymne de Callimaque," *Studii Clasice* 11 (1969) 85-93.

[34] Herter, Bursian 255 (1937) 195, following Vahlen and Cessi, denies any political reference in the image; the argument of Meincke (175-78) decisively refutes this position.

are very fluid indeed: the anthropomorphism of Bia and Kratos, Gaia, Hades, and Nereus is most uncertain and changes with context.[35] Callimachus does not here openly assert that a man still living has already penetrated the boundaries between gods and mortals, nor will Theocritus. But both take every opportunity to indicate those boundaries as weak and ambiguous and to highlight the figures who have already crossed them.

It is generally true of the courtly poems that lines are drawn from the throne to Olympus not in one, but a number of ways simultaneously: similarity, tutelage, blood relationship, reincarnation, identity. Complex as this field of affinities may be, it is hardly more so than the strategies of association with the gods being used by the Ptolemies themselves,[36] on whom, therefore, the subtlety of these poets would not be lost. Most often, of course, the divinity of the Theoi Adelphoi manifested itself in no more than that title incorporated into eponymous prescripts as a pledge of loyalty to the throne. While insisting only on such gestures, the Ptolemies also invited a full spectrum of confusions about their identity, as, for example, by the adoption of the gods' ἐπικλήσεις. Those who walked the Alexandrian street of Ἀρσινόης Ἐλεήμονος (*PLondon Inv.* 2243.13) were being prepared for the queen's full acceptance as Arsinoe Aphrodite.[37] What poets in calling the queen Aphrodite may have intended as a flattering metaphor was in cult rapidly reifying. Along with their own shrines, the Ptolemies also erected their statues in the temples of other gods so as to become σύνναοι θεοί [38]—a somewhat tentative gesture which might leave unclear for a period of time whether the monarchs were manifesting thereby

[35] As we first meet them, Bia and Kratos (v. 66) must be abstractions, but the rest of the line ("whom you, Zeus, set beside your throne") just as explicitly personifies them (so Wilam., *H.D.* II.9 n. 2). Hades (v. 62) is actually one of the brothers drawing lots, but the name is used in the poem only of the place. Rhea calls on her mother (Γαῖα φίλη v. 29), then strikes her, as she has now become the earth. The name Neda is transferred from nymph to river, so that when she mingles with Nereus, it is only a confluence of waters.

[36] On the range and meaning of the various ways of associating man and god, from simile to incarnation, see the excellent discussion of A. D. Nock, "Notes on Ruler Cult, I-IV," *JHS* 48 (1928) 30-38; and J. Tondriau, "Le Point culminant du culte des souverains," *EtCl.* 15 (1947) 109-13.

[37] Visser 74-77; J. Tondriau, "Princesses ptolémaïques comparées ou identifiées à des déesses," *BSRAA* 37 (1948) 16-18; and Fraser I.197; in poetry, see especially Posidippus *Ep.* 12 G. P. and Callimachus *Ep.* 5 Pf.

[38] On which, see A. D. Nock, "Synnaos Theos," *HSCP* 41 (1930) 1-62

their piety of their divinity, that is, whether they were there symbolically to pay or share tribute. In time some of these associations took root, so that at a certain point after her death Arsinoe was not simply linked to Isis by statues standing in her temples, but was herself represented with Isis' attributes as a σύνναος θεός in the temples of other gods.[39] Even while the Ptolemies kept their mortal features in portraiture, they freely caused the attributes of various gods to be added, with the result that they appeared as human beings acting as deities. Of the many possibilities suggested, only some (chiefly involving Arsinoe) caught the popular imagination and came to have real religious significance. What concerns us here is that, in the years when Theocritus was writing, the Ptolemies themselves were devising (or commissioning) a whole range of contexts, all of them more suggestive than explicit, in which they might keep company with the Olympians. For this process to work, the particulars had to remain vague for a period of time, though the larger drift of destiny could not have been clearer. Modern scholars who insist that the poets could have read their royal patrons into myth only on the basis of rigid and exclusive one-to-one correspondences, some precise and limiting sort of allegory, would not get far in the Ptolemaic culture ministry.

Arsinoe's Adonis festival, as depicted in *Id.* 15, offers the single fullest example of the complex pattern of suggestion whereby the myths of royal cult support the religious claims being made about the dynasty itself.[40] For Theocritus' Gorgo and Praxinoa, the homage to Adonis is clearly an homage to the Ptolemies as well. The women are sure that in both cases they are dealing equally with gods, for Soter is ἐν ἀθανάτοις (v. 47), as is Berenice (vv. 106-8). Arsinoe herself has only the rank of a Helen (v. 110), and, appropriately, getting into this crowded palace is like storming Troy

[39] See Thompson, *Ptolemaic Oinochoai* 58 f.

[40] On the relationship of the poem to cult, see G. Glotz, "Les Fêtes d'Adonis sous Ptolémée II," *REG* 33 (1920) 169-222; A. S. F. Gow, "The *Adoniazusae* of Theocritus," *JHS* 58 (1938) 180-204, and again II.262-304; and W. Atallah, *Adonis* (Études et Commentaires 62; Paris 1966) 105-35. As with the sibling-spouses Osiris and Isis, the Adonis myth may also have been encouraged for some of its incestuous aspects. Panyasis (*apud* Apollod. 3.14.4) considered Adonis the son of the Syrian king Thias and his daughter Smyrna (cf. Ant. Lib. 24 and Tzetzes *ad* Lycophron vv. 829 and 831). The later tradition (first perhaps Plato Com. *apud* Ath. 456a) made the parents Smyrna (or Myrrha) and her father, Cinyras, who as king of Cyprus would have been of particular interest to the Ptolemies.

(v. 62); but her immortal destiny is inevitable, if not yet explicit. In its larger outlines, the Adonis myth is broadly appropriate for the royal house, and it is through Aphrodite and Adonis that the monarchs demonstrate certain attributes which they would like to be appreciated in themselves. The uniqueness of Adonis among mythic heroes in triumphing over death (v. 137) is much like that of the Ptolemies in deifying their parents (*Id.* 17.121 f.). Indeed, it is Aphrodite who brings Adonis back to life, as she has Berenice (vv. 106-8). The combination of marriage and funeral shows a cycle of regeneration, as also in the cult of Isis and Osiris, tied to a sacred union. Clearly this cluster of themes reflects on the ἱερὸς γάμος of the Theoi Adelphoi themselves, as Theocritus underscores by a brief allusion to the marriage of Zeus and Hera (v. 64; cf. Callim. fr. 75.4 Pf.). And, as in the Core myth, from Adonis' mysterious regeneration springs the fertility of the land (vv. 112-17). So, too, in the more or less official account of the *Ptolemy* the beneficence of the Theoi Soteres is tied to their love for one another (*Id.* 17.51 f. and 124 f.), while the image of Zeus' ἱερὸς γάμος with Hera posits a similar explanation for the miraculous fertility of Egypt (*Id.* 17.77-81) under the Theoi Adelphoi. This regenerative ἔρως has long been at work in the royal family: Semele (*Id.* 26) and Alcmena (*Id.* 24) both attain immortality through their unions with Zeus, and it is through his sister Hebe that Heracles is seen as marrying into Olympian society (*Id.* 17.32 f. and *Id.* 24.84 f. and 169 f.). No, Adonis is hardly Soter or Philadelphus, and his cyclical regeneration is not quite what the Ptolemies foresaw for themselves. But the linkage of issues, the overall structure, is broadly appropriate to the royal family's current project of marrying and deifying each other. Speaking through his compatriots, the Syracusan women, Theocritus voices his approval. Gorgo and Praxinoa lay considerable weight on their Greekness (vv. 89-95) and their detestation of the native Egyptians (vv. 47-50). Yet even they see nothing worrisomely pharaonic in the monarch's behavior. Some Greeks had been less approving.[41] Athenaeus (621a) reports that the wag Sotades had chided Philadelphus (Powell, *Coll. Alex.* 238):

[41] There is no evidence for any new tolerance toward consanguineous marriages by this point, even though they did become rather more common in the Roman period. Among the Greeks of Egypt the marriage of siblings is attested only for the Ptolemies. See H. Thierfelder, *Die Geschwisterehe im hellenistisch-römischen Ägypten* (Munster 1960).

εἰς οὐχ ὁσίην τρυμαλιὴν τὸ κέντρον ὠθεῖς.

Arsinoe and Philadelphus were not amused; and Sotades, we are told, ended up at the bottom of the sea for his trouble. Theocritus seems much more inclined to reassure everyone that the best sort of Greeks have always behaved thus.

It must also be kept in mind that Greeks outside of the Ptolemaic empire may have been listening as well, especially to poets with the stature of Callimachus and Theocritus. The Ptolemies felt a keen sense of cultural competition with the other royal houses and took pains to make their own festivals panhellenic occasions. But what was dogma at home could easily enough seem folly to foreign eyes. To avert this embarrassment the Ptolemies, with magnificent inconsistency, made a point of showing their devotion as *mortals* at the shrines where it would be noticed—in Olympia, Delos, and Delphi.[42] Even at home they had to reckon with the fact that dedications were more often made to other gods on their behalf (ὑπέρ) than to themselves as gods.[43] The contradictory stance of the patron in being at once pious and divine finds its way into much of the courtly verse of these years where the Ptolemies and their divine relatives are seen more often as worshipping than being worshipped, though with the constant implication that the one leads to the other. Though the *Ptolemy* presents Philadelphus as the greatest of kings and the next of immortals, he ends the encomium as the pious son founding a cult for his parents. Even Soter and Alexander, who are already safely over the line, are shown being subservient to their ancestor Heracles. Arsinoe sponsors the Adonia. Helen, who will on the morrow receive the libations of her erstwhile playmates, is noted for her own hymns to Artemis and Athena (*Id.* 18.35 f.). Agave and her sisters appear to attain divine honors in *The Bacchantes* through their service to Dionysus, and even the infant Heracles of *Id.* 24 shows a pious impulse to dedicate the snakes that he has slaughtered to his father (though he confuses the mortal father with the divine). Much later Berenice will be seen dedicating her lock to Arsinoe Aphrodite. The motif may be solemn, or, as in the last two cases, playful; but it is frequent and

[42] See especially the discussion of E. Will, *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique* I (Annales de l'Est 30; Nancy 1966) 183.

[43] Though even this formula may in time have evolved into a vague expression of tribute. See Taeger, *Charisma* I.299 and 302 f., and Fraser II.374 n. 297.

distinctive, and seems to result from the Ptolemies' uniquely unreasonable insistence on being simultaneously priests and gods.

The flattering comparison to the Olympians alone had more than enough pitfalls for the poet, for the correspondence of myth and monarch could go fatally wrong at any point. The Ptolemies might just look quite comic as gods for, after all, the Olympians always had themselves. The ἱερὸς γάμος of Zeus and Hera in its most authoritative form, we recall, (*Il.* 14.153 ff.) is part of the Διὸς ἀπάτη. Arsinoe overwhelming her weaker brother and jealously putting aside his previous wife makes a perfect Hera. Now τρίγαμος she makes an even better Helen in tandem with the Menelaus of her ineffectual, but prosperous husband. Greek myth was simply too lively to accommodate the solemn pretensions of the monarchs. Olympus was no place for a lady, and now that the Ptolemies had advertised serious intentions of moving in, the poets had to shuffle things about quickly indeed. The assimilation of Arsinoe to Isis,[44] for instance, invited only awe and serene contemplation. But as the Greek Aphrodite she would provide a field day for any wags who had forgotten about Sotades' leaden coffin. Try to find a happy marriage in Greek myth. Hector and Andromache? I am sure neither Philadelphus nor Arsinoe would be flattered. Find tyrants who did not fall, dynasties which did not collapse from within, or self-proclaimed living gods who did not draw down a bolt from the blue. The main props of Ptolemaic grandeur—despotism, divinity, and dynastic incest—are all *bêtes noires* of that same classical tradition which the poets are expected to invoke for the royal vanity. That they did so with such great indirection is therefore understandable; that they did so with poise, remarkable. The very way that these myths have been bowdlerized by Theocritus, hardly a squeamish poet, is itself a telling clue to what he is about.

Finally, we should keep in mind that the Ptolemies' literary tastes may have been as worrisome to the encomiast as their behavior. Alexander himself had not been too proud to envy Achilles for having a Homer (Cic. *Arch.* 24), and Ziegler[45] has argued that such would be the hope of any Hellenistic monarch.

[44] Tondriau, *BSRAA* 37 (1948) 22.

[45] *Das hellenistische Epos*² (Leipzig 1966). See, however, the reservations of B. Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1963) 396-98; and Fraser, II.883 n. 58. The basic evidence is gathered by Wilamowitz, *H.D.* I.104 f., and C. Brink, "Ennius and the Hellenistic Worship of Homer," *AJP* 93 (1972) 547-52.

Theocritus, as we have seen, certainly expected as much of Hiero II and accordingly gave him his moment as a prospective Achilles or Ajax (*Id.* 16.74 f.). In Alexandria Callimachus may claim that poetry is beyond all that, but the frequency and earnestness of his *recusatio* suggests that he feels a pressure from someone, and perhaps someone quite important, to be Homeric (see above, p. 6). There is little question about the monarchs' own tastes. Ptolemy I built the Serapeion at Memphis around a statue of the bard;[46] Ptolemy IV would erect a temple to him (Ael. *V.H.* 13.22).[47] Pity poor Philadelphus with a near monopoly on the best Homeric scholars and hexametric poets, yet getting nothing for his trouble but the rarefied new doctrine that such old-fashioned heroics are gauche.[48] Why not Hesiod instead? suggests Callimachus. After all, Hesiod was right about the succession of younger sons (just like Philadelphus himself, as it happens) to the throne (*Jov.* 57-67), where Homer was wrong. Even to get Hesiod's cooperation, however, requires a feat of legerdemain, since more than a little of the regicide lurks in the Boeotian. His politics would not be welcome in Alexandria. Callimachus does finally manage to turn Hesiod's words, ἐκ δὲ Διὸς βασιλῆες (*Theog.* 96 = *Jov.* 79), against his message and thereby make Zeus a friend of tyrants in a way that would send Hesiod spinning in his grave.[49] Homer is yet more of a problem to the prospective eulogist. For one thing, Callimachus

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[46] C. Picard, "Les Originaux retrouvés des statues grecques du Sérapeion de Memphis," *CRAI*, 1951, 75 f.

[47] See the anonymous dedicatory poem, O. Guérard and P. Jouguet, *Un Livre d'écolier du IIIe siècle av. J.-C.* (Cairo 1938) 25 f. = D. L. Page, *Greek Literary Papyri* I (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Massachusetts 1942) 452 (105 *b*).

[48] Vitruvius VII *praef.* 8 f. records Philadelphus' sharp reply to the depreciation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* by Zoilus Homeromastix. The meeting is chronologically impossible, but the tale may derive from some more substantial tradition about the king's dim view of the *detrectatores Homeri* and of presumptuous poets in general. See P. M. Fraser, "Aristophanes of Byzantion and Zoilus Homeromastix in Vitruvius," *Eranos* 68 (1970) 115-22.

[49] Discussed by K. Ziegler, "Zum Zeushymnus des Kallimachos," *RhM* n.s. 68 (1913) 336-39. Theocritus pays tribute to Callimachus by rephrasing the same sentiments (Δὶι Κρονίωνι μέλοντι / αἰδοῖοι βασιλῆες *Id.* 17.73 f.) in language drawn from the same Hesiodic passage (βασιλεῦσιν ἅμ' αἰδοίοισι *Theog.* 80). He uses the same technique earlier (Κόως δ' ὀλόλυξεν ἰδοῖσα *Id.* 17.64) in echoing the latter half of *H. Hom.* 3.119 (ἐκ δ' ἔθορε πρὸ φόωσδε· θεαὶ δ' ὀλόλυξαν ἅπασαι) after Callimachus had imitated its beginning (ὁ δ' ἔκθορεν *Del.* 255). See Schlatter, *Theokrit und Kallimachos* 25-34

waits ready to strike like a viper anyone who wanders from the narrow, untrodden road of λεπταὶ ῥήσιες. Even worse, the bard himself has all manner of unwelcome lessons about the fates of great dynasties and about the absoluteness of human mortality. Philadelphus would make a fine study for an Agamemnon, but never for an Achilles. Though Theocritus will clearly venture further into this treacherous territory than his colleague, he does not proceed without a good command of the Callimachean science of misreading authoritative sources: the Homeric μελέων ἐξείλετο θυμόν (*Od.* 11.201) is inverted for Soter into μελέων ἐξείλετο γῆρας (*Id.* 17.24). The same words now bear an almost directly opposite message. Similarly, the career of Heracles, with which Pindar once comforted Chromius for being mortal (*Nemean* 1), now serves in *Id.* 24 to congratulate Ptolemy for rising above that condition. As we shall see, the Thebes of Pindar's ode is left unnamed in the *Heracliscus* to invite association with Homer's Ithaca, from which many of the *Idyll*'s details derive. It is now an Ithaca that gives birth to demigods. Though the Helen and Menelaus of *Id.* 18 are just as authentically Odyssean, they are also in some ways very misleading representatives of the Homeric outlook: they make the conspicuous exceptions to Homer's insistence on the inescapability of death. His Helen and Menelaus, of course, will pass on in Elysium only to the eternal torment of their own bad marriage. Theocritus avoids any reminder of this irony and demonstrates instead through these Spartan maidens who now turn to the worship of their former playmate that the current Alexandrian penchant for founding cults to the living had started already in the age of heroes.[60] Homer and Pindar can indeed be summoned to the tendance of the royal *gloire*, but only when their central values are turned inside out.

Yet, as was seen in the case of *The Charites*, utility coincides with fashion (or perhaps creates fashion?), for the mixing of genres allows the poet to penetrate into this heroic geography with techniques imported from lyric (*Idd.* 18 and 26) and mime (*Idd.* 15 and 24) which prevent a full-scale commitment to the now unwelcome or untenable values of the Homeric background. The poet's constant

[60] Apollonius Rhodius similarly implies that for their heroism the Dioscuri who started out as just members of the crew of the *Argo*, come to be honored οἷα θεοῖσιν (*Argon.* 2.809) with hymns, temples, and precincts (2.163 and 806-10). See P. Händel, *Beobachtungen zur epischen Technik des Apollonios Rhodios* (Munich 1954) 47 f.

delight in deflating the old myths by restaging them in commonplace circumstances turns out to have the very practical use, once the irony is brought under control, of making those myths more accessible to the living gods. And when they are feeling epiphanic, encomium may just as freely rise to the mode of hymn. To be sure, the patrons enter this mythic background only by analogy, merest suggestion—but suggestion too consistent, too pervasive, and too systematic to be overlooked. In most cases the analogies seem of the Ptolemies' own devising. The point may not have been for them to feel glorious against this background so much as comfortable, for, most remarkably, this is a poetic world of which the current generation of monarchs and gods is the least eccentric part.

The Encomium of Ptolemy (*Id.* 17) [51]

The praise of the Ptolemies, as we have seen, is for the most part insinuated into poems on other subjects. Only in *Id.* 17, a hybrid of rhetorical prose encomium and Homeric Hymn, does a poet stand up to address to the monarch the traditional sort of open, public praise.[52] "Stiff, conventional and sycophantic," grumbles Gow (II.325); and Legrand [53] can take comfort only in the prospect that other courtiers may have gone further. Meincke's long study has done little to reverse these judgments. Most recently Cairns [54] has suggested that we abandon the poem as a hymn and appreciate instead its artful selection among the τόποι that Menander was to prescribe for the βασιλικὸς λόγος. The close parallels in other eulogistic poems, however, recommend just the opposite: namely, that we credit *Id.* 17, as we would any other *Idyll*, for the suggestive quality of its images, that is, for its somewhat evasive myths rather than its more straightforward versification of official realities. In the *Ptolemy*, no less than in *Idd.* 15, 18, 24, and 26, the address to the controversial issues of incest, self-deification, and succession to the throne is subterranean, below the level of literal statement, which here presents an expansive, but perfunctory catalogue of

[51] For a survey of work on the poems, see Meincke 30. Additional items are listed by H. Beckby, *Die griechischen Bukoliker* (Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 49; Meisenheim am Glan 1975) 467. The best single discussion remains that of Wilamowitz (*H.D.* II.130-35).

[52] The form is analyzed by Fraustadt, *Encomiorum ... historia* 91 f., and most extensively by Meincke, 85-164.

[53] *Bucoliques grecs I: Théocrite* (Budé; Paris 1925; reprinted 1967) 145.

[54] *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Edinburgh 1972) 104-12.

γοναί and ἀρεταί of the most innocuous sort. The poet makes no explicit *apologia* for the patrons' behavior. How could he? He is not going to grace the wedding with an ode to incest or even openly declare Ptolemy a god before the king himself has done so. But here densely, as in Theocritus' four other handlings of royal myth, a battery of seemingly incidental and unconnected mythic images conspire to justify those parts of the monarchs' behavior that would be most abhorrent to the Greeks. The hollow enthusiasm of Theocritus as encomiast about the marriage may matter less than the subtle reminder from him as a maker of images that on Olympus incest has always been a way of life.

If the poem wants subtlety, it would be for explaining the system behind its images so straightforwardly. The problem of combining Ptolemy's mortal grandeur with his Olympian prospects emerges at once in the proem's paired couplets, which all turn on the antithesis of divine and mortal: 'Let us sing Zeus as supreme among gods (vv. 1 f.), as Ptolemy is among men (vv. 3 f.). The heroes of old, sons of demigods, won poetic praise for their deeds (vv. 5 f.); but I, knowing how to praise (ἐπιστάμενος καλὰ εἰπεῖν) Ptolemy, would hymn (ὑμνήσαιμ') him (vv. 7 f.).' The opposition between man and god so strongly stated in the first four lines finds a tentative resolution in the following quatrain in two different ways. First, Theocritus finds a third category between ἀθάνατοι and ἄνδρες, namely, that of ἡμιθέων.[65] We do not initially know who would be in it; the ἥρωες are, somewhat against earlier tradition, merely sons of that race (see Gow *ad loc.*). The strategy of the poem will be finally to promote Ptolemy (if only in the future tense) to that intermediate class of men who are not mortal (v. 135 f.), partly by reviewing his connections with Olympus through birth and divine favor, partly by showing how he is superior to the epic ἥρωες, as, of course, he is to the men of his own generation. Paralleling that movement will be a gradual shift, anticipated here as well, into the mode of hymn, a form appropriate to gods (ὕμνοι δὲ καὶ ἀθανάτων γέρας αὐτῶν) and only to gods. If men properly receive encomia, as gods do hymns, Ptolemy merits the combination of the two that this poem is to be. Ptolemy the man is memorialized on the level of prosaic statement within the conventional format of encomium, and Theocritus makes no explicit claims about him as

[65] For a different interpretation of this triadic arrangement, see Sanchez-Wildberger, *Theokrit-Interp.* 31 f.

anything but a mortal. It is the poetic form and its images which respond to the god that lurks within.

Theocritus thus outlines his eulogistic strategy from the first and caps it at the end, appropriately, by an image: Iris (at the wedding of Zeus and Hera), who is a fitting symbol for the incessant shuttling between earth and Olympus that goes on in this poem. Zeus snatches up Soter (vv. 16-18), Aphrodite saves Berenice (vv. 36-50), Zeus' eagle comes to greet Philadelphus' birth (vv. 71-73). After these descents from heaven have become almost commonplace to us, Theocritus takes another look at how the Theoi Soteres were saved from the oblivion attending other dynasties—in this case, by being promoted to cult (vv. 118-30). Now the effective agent—the savior, as it were—is Philadelphus rather than, as before, a full-fledged god. In this light he appears to participate profoundly in the divine plan. His foundation of a family cult seems not merely his own idea, not an act of dynastic assertion, but rather a pious response to the interventions that Zeus and Aphrodite have already made (see Meincke 97). Similarly, the hymn works around in a ring, as promised at the outset, devoting itself to Zeus first and last. Ptolemy, structurally as well as religiously, is the man in the middle. The resplendent fixtures of the shrines that Ptolemy builds (vv. 121-25) rather conspicuously resemble those of the halls of Zeus at the start. The topography of the poem's final movement—Hades (v. 120), Olympus (vv. 131 f.), Mt. Ida for the marriage of Zeus and Hera in vv. 133 ff.—simply reverses the sequence of the poem's opening: the woodman on Mt. Ida (vv. 9 f.), the Ptolemaic ancestors on Olympus (vv. 14-33), Berenice on the brink of Acheron (vv. 46-49). The significance of the woodman simile can emerge fully only in retrospect. It is unobtrusive as it stands: the poet, like the woodman, hardly knows where to begin. Thereafter Mt. Ida itself comes to have significance not only as a Homeric site, but also as a point of intersection between the divine and mortal spheres, a permeable boundary which suggests that certain privileged natures can pass from one realm to the other. The Theoi Adelphoi through their union, so like the first ἱερὸς γάμος on Mt. Ida, are implied to have made that passage.

This system of images has a life quite independent of Theocritus' very conventional survey of royal attributes within the format of encomium. The final view of Hades (v. 120), for instance, formally

refers back to the poet's celebration of the immortalizing power of poetry, but functions more crucially as a foil for the new topic to follow, which is the rather more substantial form of immortality which the kings have just conferred on themselves. Theocritus never does indicate explicitly what the connection is between poetry and the family cults to which he then turns. Throughout the poem transitions are spare indeed; here, too, the audience must make the connection for themselves. Nor does Theocritus explain how the cults and the marriage serve to justify one another. Perhaps it is not his place to do so. Instead, he presents a series of vivid scenes—Olympus, Acheron, Ptolemy's birth on Cos—which rise from their immediate contexts to coalesce into a larger picture of a world where incest and apotheosis become not only natural, but necessary.

Let us look now at how each of the central themes develops throughout the poem, starting with the delicate matter of the patron's imminent, but as yet unacknowledged promotion to godhead. Theocritus surely catches Ptolemy's attention at the outset by so brusquely relegating him to a realm much lower than that of Zeus. Yet, as promised in the second quatrain, the pattern of myths and the emergent hymnic form of the poem will gradually work to blur this unflattering contrast. The τόπος γένους at once shows the royal ancestors on Olympus, with the implication that the immortality transmitted through the family from Zeus down to Alexander and Soter can hardly stop there. Berenice lacks such a lineage,[56] but the assimilation of the queen of Egypt to Aphrodite, queen of goddesses (v. 45), reveals that the royal nature is susceptible to deification on its own virtues. Can the affinity of the king of gods to Philadelphus, the king of men, be any less strong? No less than does his mother, Ptolemy has at his birth the favor of the gods (vv. 60-76). There are, then, two modes of access to Olympus, blood and assimilation, both of which are available to Philadelphus. His birth is shown to bear an unmistakable resemblance to those both of Zeus and of Apollo, as they are presented in the Homeric and Callimachean hymns. By this point, as in all of the eulogistic poems, the mortal father has largely faded from view. The πατρώια (v. 104) which Ptolemy increases seem to derive most directly not from Soter, but from Zeus, who at his birth grants

[56] See Wilam., *H.D.* II.133, and Meincke 102.

Philadelphus ὄλβος and, apparently, a remarkable autonomy; for hereafter he seems no more reliant on Zeus for prosperity than Egypt is on him for rain (v. 78). The unrivaled fertility of this arid land anticipates the praeternatural generativity of incestuous marriages—of Ptolemy's, as we shall see, not less than of Zeus'. The concluding δίδου δ' ἀρετήν τε καὶ ὄλβον of Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus* becomes simply ἀρετήν γε μὲν ἐκ Διὸς αἰτεῦ (v. 137)[57] for Philadelphus, who reigns like a god over Egypt, very much set apart from the mere mortals with whom he was first classed. The divinity which the poet never openly affirms can be deduced from many different angles, until by the end the formula used for Hera as both Zeus' κασιγνήτην ἄλοχόν τε (*Il.* 16.432 and 18.356) can just as well be adapted for Arsinoe's mate (v. 130). Now in the celebration of the ἱερὸς γάμος, the comparability of Zeus and his descendant is not qualified, as it was at the start, by the separateness of their realms; they are simply alike, if not identical. Ptolemy's reference group is no longer explicitly ἀνδρῶν (v. 3), but ambiguously 'those who have lately walked the earth'. As Theocritus promised at the first, he has sung Zeus first and last and Ptolemy in the midst; but clearly the perceived relationship between the two has shifted enormously in the interval. This evolving perspective in the poem, where line by line Ptolemy is increasingly seen from below, is a just reflection of the extent to which in the world of gods and men Philadelphus, no less than his ancestors, is upwardly mobile.

Theocritus doubtless welcomed Philadelphus' momentary hesitation before taking the final step to Olympus. A θεὸς ἐπιφανής might send his poets out into rivalry with frigid productions like the Athenian *Hymn to Demetrius Poliorcetes*—a dismal prospect. On the other hand, were the king not a god at all, he might expect to be celebrated as another Achilles or Ajax, as Theocritus suspected that Hiero would (*Id.* 16.74). Plain fact would deflate that heroic conceit as much as would refined Callimachean taste. Ptolemy was no warrior. He may not even have rivaled his sister on this score. Callimachus can find no more stirring proof of his prowess than the stranding and starving of mutinous Gaulish mercenaries

[57] On the sentiment and on the relationship between the two poets, see Wilam. *Textg.* 54 f.; M. Pohlenz, "Die hellenistische Poesie und die Philosophie" in Χάριτες . . . *Friedrich Leo* (Berlin 1911) 101 = *Kleine Schriften* II, ed. H. Dörrie (Hildesheim 1965) 26; G. Perrotta, "Studi di poesia ellenistica," *SIFC* 4 (1925) 36-62; and Gow II. 347.

on an island in the delta (*Del.* 171-85). Theocritus cannot, therefore, pretend that Philadelphus surpasses his father and Alexander as warriors, but he does put the two into particularly unimposing and, indeed, submissive poses on Olympus (vv. 30-33).[58] Later on he notes that Ptolemy's strength is so matchless that it need not prove itself in actual combats: who would attack Egypt (vv. 98-101)? But these are just stopgap measures. Most importantly, it is easier to show Philadelphus transcending the old heroism as a god than rivaling it as a warrior. Why be a mere Achilles when you can join the Olympians? The priamelic introduction to the scene of Philadelphus' birth suggests this shift (vv. 53-57): 'As Deipyle bore Diomedes; and Thetis, Achilles; so Berenice bore Philadelphus.' The lines can be read in several ways: Philadelphus is at least in very good company, the kind the family had chosen for itself, possibly in a cult of Thetis (see Pfeiffer *ad* fr. 228.15). Achilles' paternal line descends from Zeus, as does Philadelphus'. That Ajax and Achilles were the Homeric heroes who surpassed their fathers is as close as Theocritus comes to making that unlikely assertion for Ptolemy II (see Wilam., *H.D.* II. 133). But the poet is at the same time subtly excluding the monarch from the race of mere heroes by the sequence of no divine parents (Diomedes), one (Achilles), and, as the poet has just established through Berenice's apotheosis, two (Philadelphus, whose birth on Cos is at once seen as very like that of Apollo on Delos). And when Theocritus seeks a foil for the self-immortalizing uniqueness of the family, he gravitates naturally to the dynasties which Homer shows us devastated, the Houses of Agamemnon and Priam (vv. 118-20). To be sure, Theocritus does indulge Ptolemy, as he does Hiero, with a few moments as a Homeric hero surrounded by his armies (vv. 93 f. and 103). But for the most part the reminiscences of conventional heroism in the poem serve to reassure Philadelphus that he is above all that. Where Theocritus might have run short of the heroic πράξεις needed to fill out a conventional encomium,[59] he modulates into the style of hymn. If by chance Ptolemy might still be feeling some unfulfilled need for another Homer, he is thereby duly reminded

[58] Soter is praised chiefly for his qualities of mind (vv. 14 f.), a motif that Theocritus may derive from Callimachus, who used it to link Ptolemy with Zeus (*Jov.* 57 and 86 f.).

[59] Compare, for example, the extensive attention given to the *laudandus'* deeds in Isocrates' *Euagoras* and Xenophon's *Agesilaus*.

that the bard's heroes were mere wretches compared to himself. Real gods can expect only graceful, often witty little hymns—not monumental epics. Theocritus seems to be evading the patron's expectations as much as yielding to them. If Philadelphus lacks the stature to sustain either a credible encomium or certainly a hymn, he has, through the Theocritean *genus mixtum*, the compliment of both. By a timely shift to the divine apparatus (which is of the monarch's own making), Theocritus can present a full measure of apparently vigorous praise without, remarkably, any bending of historical truth concerning earthly affairs.

Just as Ptolemy's prospects as a new Zeus or a Heracles relieve the poet of the distasteful task of making of him another Achilles, they are hardly less helpful in justifying incest. By the logic of megalomania, two wrongs do make a right. As gods the Ptolemies may, in fact, must marry each other. Conversely, the Olympians are best known by the perquisites that they enjoy, so that possibly for the Greeks, as certainly for the Egyptians, the marriage of the Theoi Adelphoi was itself a persuasive manifestation of godhead. Those who have the privilege must somehow deserve it.

The use of the marriages of Zeus and Heracles as precedents needs no further discussion. The Theoi Soteres, however, presented more of a problem to the poet, for they were the black sheep of the family in having succumbed to their exogamous proclivities. Theocritus obscures this fact somewhat by making the marriages of the parents and the children mirror images of one another. 'Never had a man founded rites for his parents' (vv. 121-23); 'never had a couple loved as the Theoi Soteres loved' (vv. 38 f.); 'nowhere is there a better wife than Arsinoe' (v. 128 f.). The idea of making the children's marriage seem simply to recreate that of the parents need not have been original, for it had already been or would shortly be circulated throughout the realm by the series of coins bearing jugate heads of Ptolemy I and Berenice marked θεῶν on the obverse and of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II on the reverse with nearly the same features and the title ἀδελφῶν.[60] Though Herzog [61] departs the evidence in contending that Soter was

[60] I. M. Sboronos, Τὰ νομίσματα τοῦ κράτους τῶν Πτολεμαίων IV (Athens 1908) pl. XIV nos. 15-23 and 25-31.

[61] "Herondea," *Philologus* 82 (1934) 53-58. See also W. Koch, "Die ersten Ptolemäerinnen nach ihren Münzen," *ZfN* 34 (1924) 82 f., who suggests that the coins are designed to imply the resemblance of the royal couples

actually Berenice's half brother, he rightly sees this as the broad implication of the coinage. The exact symmetry of the coins invites the user both to deduce the children's divinity from that of the parents and, flipping back to the obverse, to project the younger couple's consanguinity back to the nearly identical image of their parents.

The children, then, are in some sense the reincarnation of their parents—and a reincarnation as a couple, not merely as individuals. Love alone brings them together, and Aphrodite appears in the *Ptolemy*, as in *The Adoniazusae*, only as her pure, Uranian self, to whom Berenice is assimilated as the very model of fidelity. The benefactions of the πάντεσσιν ἐπιχθονίοισιν ἀρωγούς (v. 125) whom Philadelphus worships have earlier been seen to center on the nurturence of pure loves, which the children must surely both enjoy and promote through their own εὐεργεσία. To underscore the dynastic implications of marital fidelity, the praises of Berenice are linked to a homily attacking adulterous wives and their illegitimate offspring. Surely no poet in these years could raise such a topic even in the most general terms without expecting the audience to supply names. The target here will be Soter's earlier wife, Eurydice, and with her are repudiated the claims of her children to Philadelphus' throne.[62] The audience must equally be reminded of the first Arsinoe, whose recent banishment had made possible the marriage of the Theoi Adelphoi. This is clearly a most delicate issue for the poet, since her children had remained behind to be adopted by Arsinoe II (Σ *Id.*17.128) and inherit the throne. What had Theocritus to gain by calling them bastards and the king a cuckold? Yet one of the best defenses, and perhaps an indispensable one, of the marriage of siblings was that it protected the dynasty from the treacheries of outsiders. Arsinoe I could be invoked as a case in point. Theocritus delivers his lecture, but at a safe distance from

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to Zeus and Hera. On the uniformity of the family portraits, see H. W. Smith, "Sculptural Style in Ptolemaic Portrait Coins," *Berytus* 10 (1950-1951) 27 f.; and Thompson, *Ptolemaic Oinochoai* 82 f.

[62] The Macedonians in particular might well still resent the fact that Antipater's grandson Ceraunus had been set aside in favor of the child of Berenice, who had been Eurydice's lady-in-waiting. In addition, Pausanias (1.7.1) reports that in this same period Philadelphus felt obliged to kill off two other half-brothers, Argaeus and another (Meleager ?), on the grounds of conspiracy and mutiny. In both cases Philadelphus could have justified his treatment of his rivals on the grounds that only he was descended from *both* of the Theoi Soteres.

the sensitive subject of Philadelphus' marital affairs. Though the homily is attached to the parents' marriage rather than to the children's, it inevitably generalizes itself to cover both unions because of their broad equivalence.[63] Whatever Philadelphus' embarrassment in putting aside Arsinoe I, he may thereby be perceived as all the more his father's son, since Soter himself had come only late to a faithful, loving, and indeed divine wife worthy of him. In sum, Theocritus' depiction of Soter and Berenice has raised a number of issues which will color the way we perceive the marriage of their children. As in any healthy and strong union, it will be Aphrodite who in this case brings brother and sister together—an unsettling thought. Yet is it not right and normal for mother herself, Berenice-Aphrodite, to attend to family solidarity? The Theoi Soteres established the consummate model of the successful union; their children could do worse than copy it. The Ptolemies have had bad luck marrying outsiders: all the more reason for Arsinoe and Philadelphus to forge a strong new protection for the dynasty founded by their parents. The cumulative effect of these innuendoes is to transvalue incest into an act of innocence and filial piety. The Ptolemies' marriage is not an act of disruptive self-indulgence, but rather the culmination of the equally unique social order that they have established on earth. What might otherwise be seen as a crime against nature emerges instead as the wellspring of the praeternatural good fortune of Egypt. Brother has married sister, and the desert blooms without rain.

Though the *Ptolemy* is expository in a way that the other courtly poems are not, it relies nearly as much as do they on the construction of a mythic background which leaves a bit more space for the monarchs in the pantheon than even they themselves may be claiming yet. On the level of direct statement, the poem maintains a scrupulous adherence to historical fact. Accordingly, Ptolemy is nowhere called a full-fledged god, even if he is increasingly treated like one. But step by step Theocritus' factual demonstration that Philadelphus' administration on earth is perfect and complete is accompanied by images which suggest that the tally of Olympians

[63] The common assumption in the very extensive debate (reviewed by Meincke, 103 f.) about whether the allusion is to Eurydice or Arsinoe I is that only one of the women can be indicated. The ambiguity in the text which makes each of the views tenable in itself indicates that both possibilities are being suggested, but that neither is being pursued with an explicitness which might embarrass the family.

is not, and that those who have joined them have always been very like Philadelphus himself. For all of the fulsomeness of Theocritus' celebration of the king's temporal attainment, the flattery of the new god is there only for those who would deduce it.

As the single full-scale encomium from this court, the *Ptolemy* may suggest why there are not more. That very hollowness of tone so often noted by critics in itself indicates why Theocritus and Callimachus elsewhere chose to speak with poetic voices so very unlike that of the traditional encomiast. In Syracuse Theocritus had intimated that such a public voice would be possible for him when the city regained its former glory and Hiero II came to feel the need for his own Pindar. For all the embarrassment of his position, Theocritus would not allow that his calling was anything but a glorious one. At the very least he could speak patriotically as a citizen concerned for his country's fortune in war. But in Alexandria the poet, now subject rather than citizen, dared presume to no such tone. Even to a much less imposing figure like Sosibius (fr. 384 Pf.), Callimachus did not present a persona of himself as spokesman for the community, but rather let the Nile itself speak the country's congratulations to the returning victor. Alexandria may have been technically a democracy, but it was a democracy presided over by a god, who perhaps was not awaiting sanctification by the voice of the *demos*. At least since the time of the *Odyssey*, the *arete* of the ideal king had customarily been held to be manifest in the *arete* of his people.[64] So it is in *Id.* 16: Hiero will bring the people and the land itself back to life. But under the despotism of the Ptolemies, the people needed no political *arete*: in *Id.* 17 they are only the masses that swell Egypt's 33,333 cities. The image that Praxinoa uses of the numberless crowds of Alexandria, "They are like ants!" (*Id.* 15.45), reappears, tellingly, in the context of the uncountable masses who brought Ptolemy his wealth (*Id.* 17.107).

In the religious sphere, the Ptolemies had seen to their own cults and therefore would rely somewhat less on a poet's privileged insight into Olympian affairs than had their mortal predecessors. In *Id.* 16 Theocritus could pray for the community; in *Id.* 17 only Ptolemy does that (v. 137). With the loss of the *demos* and the gods as a constituency, the poet was reduced to speaking more or less

[64] Discussed by H. Herter, "Hellenismus und Hellenentum" in *Das neue Bild der Antike* I, ed. H. Berve (Leipzig 1942) 351 f.

only for himself. To be sure, Theocritus' and Callimachus' private delight in that isolation and freedom issued forth in proud images of music as the province of cicadas and shepherds. It should also be noted, however, that over against the patron these poets were notably modest in their self-presentation. In *Id.* 16 Theocritus had not completely despaired of the poet's traditional claim to be in his own realm the equal of kings or at the very least autonomous. But already Callimachus in his *Hymn to Zeus* had conceded that no one rivals kings, not even poets, whom he relegates to a banausic level not much above smiths and farmers (vv. 70-78). In *Id.* 17, Theocritus for the most part simply does not talk about himself. He maintains a strict, formal bardic anonymity,[65] and when gratitude is due, it is given on behalf of *all* poets, with no attention to himself (vv. 112-14).

The muting of the poet's public voice occasions a final moment of drama in *Id.* 17. Theocritus finally arrives at the standard theme of the immortalizing power of poetry, which figures so largely in *Id.* 16. However, this issue should not interest living gods quite as urgently as it might mere mortals. Indeed, would the Ptolemies relish an "exegi monumentum aere perennius" from the poet when they were so deeply engaged in setting up such memorials all over Alexandria and Egypt? Theocritus flirts with disaster: 'What is better for a prosperous man than to win goodly fame among men? That is all that remains to the House of Atreus, for all they took from the House of Priam.' Such a *memento mori* seems like a fatal misjudgment at the christening of a new and, by its own insistence, immortal dynasty. But it is a bluff, for the rhetorical question, surprisingly, has an answer. Can anything surpass the κλέος ἐσθλόν of poets? Yes—the immortality that the Ptolemies have already achieved for themselves, as we see in the family cults and sacred marriage now to be described. As the monarch rises to his glory, the poet discreetly attenuates his own claims to authority: he hopes, finally, to offer an ἔπος οὐκ ἀπόβλητον among men, but no more (vv. 136 f.). It is Ptolemy himself who must speak to (and for?) the gods (v. 137). If the poet here speaks out for once in a public mode, it is only to sound a retreat, to recall a kind of authority that the new order of things in Alexandria has taken from him,

[65] "Das Gedicht ist in allem geschmackvoll, elegant, untadelhaft; aber von dem Theokrit, den wir lieben, ist freilich kaum etwas darin." — Wilam., *H.D.* II.135.

and to yield finally to the single figure who has become king, priest, prophet, and god of the society.

The Adoniazusae (Id. 15)

In the poems that follow, Theocritus entrusts his praise, covert and open, to a variety of voices very unlike his own: Gorgo and Praxinoa (*Id.* 15), the Spartan maidens (*Id.* 18), and even Teiresias (*Id.* 24). Such mimicry is, of course, his natural habit; and the Ptolemies, if they accepted the kind words of Herodas' bawd (1.26-36), can hardly have been squeamish about where they found their flattery. It is Callimachus, not surprisingly, who takes such ventriloquism to its greatest lengths in praising the Ptolemies variously from the stance of a fervent, somewhat rambling symposiast (*Jov.*), the deceased Philotera (*Apotheosis of Arsinoe*), the unborn Apollo (*Del.*), a nautilus shell (*Ep.* 5), and even the sentimental lock of Berenice (fr. 110 Pf).[66] These voices can be amusing, as the Syracusan women are, even though they witness to the real affection felt by the populace for the royal family. The speakers can evoke another age, as, for instance, that of Alcman and Sappho in *Id.* 18. Politically they can distract from the matter at hand: the preciosity of Apollo's foetal perspective gracefully obscures the fact that in conventional heroic terms Ptolemy's great act, the stranding of the mutinous Gaulish mercenaries on an island in the delta, is not much to brag about. The distant view of the foreign mercenaries in *Id.* 14, from some unspecified place in the Mediterranean, allows Ptolemy to be seen with a certain comradely affection not perhaps proper in the king's own subjects. Through Arsinoe's sister, Philotera, Callimachus can touchingly express his own profound grief for the dead queen without himself presuming to intimacy with the royal family. For the most part the poets speak from positions either very much higher than their own or very much lower. Callimachus prefers to speak through the mouths of gods; Theocritus and Herodas in their mimes use the common folk of mime. What we do not hear in the various fictive speakers is the privilege and powerlessness of the courtier. One of the reasons that Callimachus' and especially Theocritus' activity at court has been so

[66] Callimachus may speak *in propria persona* in celebrating Arsinoe's marriage (fr. 392 Pf.), but the poem is not directly addressed to the monarchs (ὦ ξεῖνε).

little noticed is that it is at precisely such moments that the poets are most evasive about themselves.

The Adoniazusae demonstrates that the patrons were capable of humor, at least when it was not directed at themselves.[67] In seeing the rococo extravagance of the grotto of Adonis through the impressionable eyes of the Syracusan women, Theocritus clearly shares some of the irony of the Ptolemies themselves toward the façade that they presented to the masses. Likewise, the *Ptolemy* begins with Heracles at a symposium. We should not, therefore, be surprised to find a lighter side to the *Helen* and the *Heracliscus*, if one safely removed from their central pieties. The disjunctive shifts of style which dominate *The Charites* figure, if more subtly, in these poems as well and serve to raise them to a more dignified tone as they conclude. The song of the Spartan maidens in *Id.* 18 breaks up into a number of discrete parts, each more reverential than the last: fescennine humor with Menelaus (vv. 9 ff.); serious address to him (vv. 16 ff.); invocation of Lady Night (vv. 26 ff.); address to Helen (vv. 38 ff.); formal valediction (vv. 49 ff.). The *Heracliscus* begins with a comic scene very like mime, but after v. 103 shifts to the less uproarious tones of didactic catalogue. Likewise, *The Adoniazusae* begins as mime, then moves to the more solemn business of the hymn singer with her rather better meter.[68] The poem does end with some convergence of the literary forms when Gorgo, without forgetting that her husband will be wanting lunch, shows herself touched by the ceremony, chimes in with her own prayers and gives the hymn the valediction that it lacks: χαῖρε, Ἄδων (v. 149).[69] The fact that these poems often do not begin solemnly does not detract from their ultimate seriousness.

The myths of *Id.* 15 and their relationship to the concerns of the court have been discussed above (pp. 65 f.). There remain two problems which Adonis as a subject presents to the Greek poet. First, his slight role in earlier poetry is hardly commensurate with the religious significance conferred on him by the Ptolemies.[70] The catalogue of traditional heroes in the hymn's epilogue (vv. 136-42), which scholars have found troublesome, proclaims Adonis as a

[67] On the humor of the poem, see Horstmann 18-57.

[68] P. Maas, *Greek Metre*, trans. H. Lloyd-Jones (Oxford 1962) 94, notes that the 'bucolic bridge' is broken twelve times in the mime section (vv. 1-99), but only once in the hymn (v. 131).

[69] So E. Bignone, *Teocrito* (Bari 1934) 162 n. 1.

[70] On Adonis' literary popularity thereafter, see Fraser I.198.

member of that distinguished corps and preeminent among them: 'Adonis ἡμιθέων. . . μονώτατος visits both earth and Acheron. Such was not the lot of Agamemnon, or Patroclus, Pyrrhus, the Lapiths, Deucalion, the house of Pelops and the Pelasgian lords of Argos.' Such purely literary figures have no apparent relevance to a cultic celebration,[71] but the comparison does serve as a reminder that the Ptolemies' cult favorites, like the family themselves, enjoy a unique status in human history and therefore in poetry. Similarly, Philadelphus μοῦνος of those on earth, having founded shrines to his parents, can expect them for himself and thereby surpass Achilles and Diomedes (*Id.* 17.53-57), as well as the Houses of Priam and Atreus (*Id.* 17.118-20). Likewise, in *Id.* 1 Daphnis, a figure with no very secure place among the traditional gods and heroes, defines the nature of bucolic heroism by his Promethean exchange with Hermes, Priapus, and Aphrodite and by his references to epic subjects like Anchises and Diomedes. In all three cases I suspect that Theocritus is using the evocation of the old heroes and gods to suggest where the new ones may fit. In *Id.* 15, then, the catalogue of heroes makes a point perhaps more literary than religious: though Theocritus may decline to sing of the imposing warriors of Troy, this new kind of song in celebration of demigods like Adonis and Ptolemy is hardly less consequent. The poem as a whole may well serve as the poet's presentation of himself to the court: like Gorgo and Praxinoa, Theocritus is bringing his Syracusan dialect to court, and with it the Sicilian mime as well.[72] After depicting how Alexandria and the palace seem to the outsider, he ends, as he did in *Id.* 17, with a graceful gesture of appreciation for the unique themes which this court offers to the poet, themes so extraordinarily significant and (he may sigh with relief) so little in need of heroic amplification.

In making Greek poetry of what is in origin an oriental cult, Theocritus must grapple with a second problem: that such syncretism not go too far. He describes the Hellenized Adonia rather than

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[71] Atallah, *Adonis* 130 f., assumes a religious significance, especially in hero cult, for the figures in the catalogue; but the connections are obscure in most cases and non-existent for figures like Patroclus. The inappropriateness of the catalogue led W. Vollgraff, "Theocritus," *Mnemosyne* n.s. 47 (1919) 357 f., to the theory that vv. 100-35 demonstrate how such hymns ought to be composed, while 136-44 parody Callimachus and his ilk to indicate the kind of style to be avoided. Cf. K. J. Dover, *Theocritus* (Basingstoke and London 1971) 209 f. ("the clumsy rampage through mythology in 137 ff.").

[72] Cf. Horstmann 114 f.

the vastly more popular cult of Sarapis and, as far as we can tell, purges the festival of any oriental touches.[73] Callimachus, always the proud Cyrenean, chooses rather to see and vilify the aspects of the cult that were abhorrent to traditional Greek taste. At *Iambus* 3.34 ff. in a context now lost to us he mutters with evident distaste that he may as well toss his hair to a Phrygian pipe for Cybele or mourn in trailing robe for Adonis, the slave of a goddess. Does not Theocritus argue for the same values by seeing Adonis worship in a way that makes it (and through it the Ptolemies themselves) look impeccably Greek? His observers are self-consciously Syracusan (vv. 91-93), and the singer is Argive (v. 97). The Egyptians make their single appearance in the *Idylls* as pickpockets (vv. 47-50), while the derisiveness of Αἰγυπτιστί seems self-evident. Theocritus seems to participate thereby with Callimachus in a conspiracy never to reveal that Egypt is not a Greek land.[74] His survey of Ptolemy's realm in *Id.* 17 juggles numbers impressively, but never admits that there are any native Egyptians there. In both poets, only victories over barbarians are reported.[75] Alexander, untainted by his contact with the East, remains forever Πέρσαισι βαρύς (*Id.* 17.19). And for Callimachus the Nile itself is a Greek river conveying to the victorious Sosibius the congratulations of a Greek community (fr. 384 Pf.). Given the Ptolemies' vigorous promotion of cultural syncretism and their own pharaonic behavior, such Hellenic chauvinism can hardly be a neutral gesture. Greek culture in Egypt was to be sure, the gift of that family; but its obliteration was also to result from the Egyptianization which they encouraged. The doubleness of their sympathies must have imposed a painful dilemma on the poet, for he was called upon to invoke the classical Greek tradition to make palatable the very acts—incest and self-deification—that pleased the Egyptians and most offended the Greeks. Thus employed, the words of Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar, as we have seen, end up turned against their original messages, so as to condone the kind of megalomania which these poets had chiefly opposed. Literarily, it is a betrayal. Perhaps, however, we should not be quick to judge, for the poet does make thereby a suggestion

[73] Legrand 132 f.; Gow, *JHS* 58 (1938) 191; and Atallah, *Adonis* 134 f. See also H. I. Bell, "Graeco-Egyptian Religion," *MusHelv* 10 (1953) 227 f.

[74] For an excellent discussion of how the Greeks in Egypt used literature and art to maintain their cultural exclusiveness, see C. H. Roberts, "Literature and Society in the Papyri," *MusHelv* 10 (1953) 264-79.

[75] Cf. Herter, *Das neue Bild* 351.

to the monarchs that their behavior, extravagant as it is, still remains properly and authentically Hellenic and that it does not need to be justified by reference to the indigenous culture. If the poet cannot stop the kings from becoming gods, he can perhaps influence the kind of gods they will become. The Ptolemies could thereby see themselves in heroic figures like Helen, Heracles, and even Dionysus (at least in the vague and upstanding figures into which Theocritus has transformed them) rather than just in the Pharaohs. It may well be for this reason that Theocritus removes all traces of Egyptian culture from his depiction of Ptolemy's realm (*Id.* 17), of his capital (*Id.* 15), and of the nature of his own monarchy (*Id.* 14). As we shall see, even the Dionysus of *Id.* 26 becomes emphatically less oriental than he was in Euripides.

The Epithalamium for Helen (*Id.* 18)

The *Helen* presents yet another celebration of marriage from the woman's perspective and again links the union to a translation from the mortal condition. In the narrator's proem, Helen is simply Τυνδαρίδα (v. 5); but the Spartan maidens see her as *Ζανός*... θυγάτηρ (v. 19),[78] just as Menelaus progresses from ὁ νεώτερος Ἀτρέος υἱῶν (for the narrator in v. 6) to son-in-law of Zeus (vv. 18 and 49) and demigod (v. 18) in the eyes of the maidens. Only yesterday these singers were Helen's playmates. Now they become her worshippers, and tomorrow will find them memorializing her in cult. Today she has been taken from her mother's side (v. 13), but tomorrow the maidens will long for her as lambs for their mother (vv. 41 f.), an image befitting a protecting goddess. In becoming οἰκέτις she becomes θεά as well, and the tone of the maidens' song, as I have mentioned, respects this transition by rising from the fescennine humor addressed to Menelaus (vv. 9-15) to the solemnity of the final hymnic salutation (vv. 49-58). In the interval Menelaus receives more respectful treatment as son-in-law of Zeus than he has as mere bridegroom (vv. 16-25), and the following address to πότνια Νύξ elevates the tone until finally the vows to Helen herself proceed in couplets, which Theocritus regularly employs for ceremonial effect

[78] Theocritus manipulates patronymics to the same effect in *Id.* 22. The Dioscuri are sons of Zeus (vv. 1, 95, 115, and 137) until the second episode, where their ignoble behavior as bandits makes them exclusively Τυνδαρίδαι (vv. 202, 212, and 216).

(vv. 37-48).[77] The χαίροις . . . χαίροις (v. 49) and dense repetitions of the concluding lines draw the poem fully into the mode of hymn, as far removed from the badinage of the poem's beginning as Helen has now become from her erstwhile playmates and from other mortals. Like the singer in *Id.* 15, the maidens here end with an announcement of the program for the next day. *Id.* 18 presents, then, the simplest and most straightforward example of a shift into hymnic style accompanying apotheosis.

The epithalamium bears an especially close resemblance to *Id.* 17. ξανθοκόμας Πτολεμαῖος (*Id.* 17.103) parallels ξανθότριχι . . . Μενελάῳ (*Id.* 18.1) (in Homer, just ξανθός); both men are noted as younger sons (*Id.* 17.64 and *Id.* 18.6). Menelaus, in fact, had been the name of Lagus' younger son, Philadelphus' paternal uncle. Helen herself is ἀγαπατάν (*Id.* 18.5), as is Philadelphus (*Id.* 17.64). The uniqueness of Menelaus' Olympian connections (μῶνος ἐν ἡμιθέοις *Id.* 18.18) recalls that of Philadelphus (μοῦνος . . . προτέρων κτλ. *Id.* 17.121 f.), as well as of Adonis (ἡμιθέων . . . μονώτατος *Id.* 15.137). The circumlocution "walk the earth" for "live" follows directly on this claim of uniqueness in *Id.* 18.20 as it does in *Id.* 17.121 f. Concerning the marriage bed, μίαν . . . χλαῖναν (*Id.* 18.19) recalls the ἕν . . . λέχος (*Id.* 17.133) of Zeus and Hera. Again mutual love is the single attractive force (*Id.* 17.38-40 and 130; *Id.* 18.54 f.); again it should issue in children resembling their parents (*Id.* 18.21 and *Id.* 17.43 f.). Leto is once more invoked as κουροτρόφος (*Id.* 18.50 and, implicitly, *Id.* 17.66-70 through the evocation of the birth of Apollo),[78] Zeus as giver of ὄλβος (*Id.* 18.52 and *Id.* 17.75 f.), and Aphrodite as guardian of marital fidelity (*Id.* 18.51 f. and *Id.* 17.36-52). It need hardly be added here that none of these motifs has any currency in the *Idylls* outside of the cycle of five poems here under consideration.

Like the other demigods in this series, then, Helen acquires a spouse, godhead, and hymnic celebrations more or less simulta-

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[77] For instance, the start and close of his encomia (*Id.* 16.1-4 and 104-9; *Id.* 17.1-12 and, with some triads, 121-37); recurrently in the songs of Thyrsis (*Id.* 1) and Simaetha (*Id.* 2, esp. vv. 159-66); and at the end of hymns (*Id.* 22.212-23 and *Id.* 26.27-38). There remains also the durable hope of squeezing the hymn of *Id.* 15 into quatrains; so W. C. Helmbold, "The Song of the Argive Woman's Daughter," *CP* 46 (1941) 17-24. See in general Wilam., *Textg.* 137-51.

[78] On Arsinoe's associations with Delos, see R. Vallois, "Le Temple délien d'Arsinoé Philadelphe ou d'Agathé Tyché," *CRAI*, 1929, 32-40.

neously; indeed, we follow the process moment by moment. Like the others, she does not appear directly on the scene. The maidens in *Id.* 18 lavish many images on Helen, but tell us really only that she is lovely, talented, pious, and now divine. Arsinoe may make of that what she will, but need not fear the particulars of a comparison to a woman half her age.

The cult of Helen, and a notably chaste Helen, was popular in Egypt. Herodotus (2.112) identifies the Memphian shrine of the ξείνη 'Αφροδίτη with Helen and reports that it was here that she waited out the Trojan War. Plutarch adds that Helen and Menelaus were much revered among the Egyptians (*Mor.* 857b), as is confirmed by a certain amount of external evidence.[79] In the *Pannychis* (fr. 227 Pf.) Callimachus invokes her as a goddess along with her brothers, the Dioscuri (*Dieg.* X.7). Helen's new-found interest in the lyre (*Id.* 18.35 f.) reminds us that Theocritus himself associates her with her brothers' patronage of song (*Id.* 22.215 f.) and at *Id.* 15.110, as we have seen, calls Arsinoe 'Ελένᾳ εἰκυῖα without explanation or, apparently, fear of being misconstrued. The identification of the two may have been a commonplace at court, for Callimachus later uses the Dioscuri to bear the dead queen to heaven in the *Apotheosis of Arsinoe* (*Dieg.* X.10-14) as they had their sister Helen (Eur. *Helen* 1666 ff.).[80]

Theocritus' Helen, like Callimachus' Zeus, has been refashioned to no small extent in the image of the monarch. Her skill with the lyre (*Id.* 18.35 f.) would seem to derive less from tradition than from the poet's need to compliment a patron of poetry. We shall shortly confront a similarly musical Heracles (*Id.* 24.109 f.). While Helen, especially around Sparta, did have certain traditional affinities with Artemis,[81] Arsinoe's assimilation to that goddess in Delian cult[82] may be a more immediate explanation for Helen's devotion to her here. Moreover, the Spartan Athena, whom Helen celebrates, should remind us that Arsinoe herself bore Χαλκίοικος as an ἐπίκλησις, a

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[79] Visser 19 f. and 84 f.; Fraser I.45.

[80] See Pfeiffer *ad loc.* and *Kallimachosstudien* 1-14.

[81] On Helen's connections with Artemis, see L. L. Clader, *Helen: The Evolution from Divine to Heroic in Greek Epic Tradition* (*Mnemosyne* Supplementum 42; Leiden 1976) 74-77.

[82] See A. Plassart, *Les Sanctuaires et les cultes du mont Cynthe à Délos* (Paris 1928) 227 f.; and Vallois, *CRAI*, 1929, 39. Evidence from Alexandria itself is scarce, but a connection there between Arsinoe and Artemis is not excluded; so Visser 34.

title which Athena held at Sparta and only at Sparta.[83] The Ptolemies, perhaps Arsinoe most of all, favored Sparta politically, as may be deduced from the Athenian decree of Chremonides soliciting support in the war named after him.[84] Finally, Helen and her set clearly are models of Dorian athleticism, which figures heavily in the *Heracliscus* as well and which surely would appeal to monarchs who themselves had founded penteteric festivals and adopted Heracles as ancestor.[85]

In this connection, Callimachus' *Bath of Pallas* offers a number of echoes to link Helen with Athena and this poem to Alexandria. The two poems dramatize women's ceremonies and begin their narratives similarly: ἔν ποκ' ἄρα Σπάρτᾳ (*Id.* 18.1) and ἔν ποκα Θήβαις (*Lav. Pall.* 57). Both present an αἴτιον from Dorian cult, concerning 'Ελένα Δενδρῖτις[86] and Eumedes respectively. Most intriguingly, where Athena runs twice sixty double courses after the fashion of the Dioscuri, the maidens of *Id.* 18 are four times sixty in number. The numbers cannot be accounted for,[87] but the parallel is striking, as is the fact that Athena (like Castor and Heracles) is to be anointed with ἄρσεν . . . ἔλαιον (*Lav. Pall.* 29), just as Theocritus' maidens anoint themselves ἀνδριστί (*Id.* 18.23). The connection between these two poems will remain a mystery, to which, however, the most attractive solution would be some common allusion to the Ptolemaic festivals and the myths imported with them, such as we may more confidently assume for *Id.* 24.

The only objection of any substance to seeing *Id.* 18 as addressed to the Theoi Adelphoi is, of course, that it might be taken to offer a most unpropitious precedent for their marriage. As we have seen, however, all analogies from Greek myth have such wayward features, and the hand of the bowdlerizer is very much in evidence in making Helen a model schoolgirl, who is much devoted to Athena and

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[83] The title is attested from the street name listed in a loan contract (*PLondon Inv.* 2243) of 252/1 published by Bell, *ArchP* 7 (1924) 17-27. On the Spartan cult, see Paus. 10.5.11 and Suidas s.v. χαλκίοικος. Bell (p. 24) suggests that it may have been the Spartans themselves who first associated Arsinoe with the local cult of Athena.

[84] *Syll.*³ 434/5 (*IG*² II.687, Add.). See Fraser I.238.

[85] Their interest may account for the poem's incessant reminders of its Spartan setting (vv. 1, 17, 31) and the troublesome Δωριστί (v. 48).

[86] On which, see G. Kaibel, "Theokrits 'Ελένης 'Επιθαλάμιον," *Hermes* 27 (1892), 255-59.

[87] The speculations of Kuiper, *Mnemosyne* n. s. 49 (1921) 231-35, are not convincing.

Artemis and subject to Aphrodite only somewhere between the ministrations of Leto and Zeus (vv. 50-52). All of the Ptolemaic encomiasts are unabashed in their amelioration of myth—to the point that innocence and virginity gain new ground. Even at her death, Arsinoe for Callimachus is still a νύμφα (*Apotheosis of Arsinoe* v. 5).[88] She can still prepare for a third (and incestuous) marriage with a ἁγνὰ λόετρα, according to the unidentified author of *PLondon Lit.* 60 recto. So, too, in *Id.* 17.133 f. παρθένος Ἶρις must purify herself with perfumes before attending to the wedding couch of Zeus and Hera. Clearly the Helen of *Id.* 18 did not spend her youth being raped by Theseus and his successors; no, she was running laps around Sparta. One must imagine that only some strong external pressure could bring Theocritus, who is nowhere else a prude, to be so skittish about the subject of Aphrodite and so fervent in his celebration of a paragon of bland decency.

On the other hand, for the poet seeking for his patrons some foothold in the Homeric world, Helen and Menelaus offer unmistakable advantages.[89] It is, of course, Menelaus' visit to Egypt, indeed to the island of Pharus where the lighthouse now stood, that gave Alexandria some claim to be a Homeric site. Already Homer noted that Helen had visited Egypt, and it was her brothers, the Dioscuri, who were at least to some extent memorialized in the Θεοῖς Σωτῆρσι of the lighthouse.[90] Most importantly, the fact that Helen and Menelaus are the only Homeric figures to escape the mortal condition—like the Ptolemies, by birth and marriage—makes them particularly attractive antecedents for the Theoi Adelphoi. Proteus'[91] explanation of Menelaus' Elysian destiny (*Od.* 4.569):

οὕνεκ' ἔχεις Ἑλένην καί σφιν γαμβρὸς Διός ἐσσι.

finds a clear echo in the maidens' song (*Id.* 18.18):

μῶνος ἐν ἡμιθέοις Κρονίδαν Δία πενθερὸν ἑξεῖς.[92]

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[88] See Pfeiffer, *Kallimachosstudien* 7.

[89] On Helen as a "faded god", see Clader, *Helen, passim.*

[90] On which, see Wilam., *Textg.* 183 n. 2, and Fraser I.18 f.

[91] Who Pseudo-Callisthenes (1.32.1-3) reports was worshipped by the inhabitants of the site of Alexandria before the city was founded and whose monument was restored by Alexander. There may also have been a cult of Thetis on the Pharus; see Pfeiffer *ad* fr. 228.15.

[92] Similarly, as Gow II. 359 notes, the lotus of v. 43 may recall Telemachus' words to Menelaus at *Od.* 4.603 concerning the abundance of that plant at Sparta, with χαμαὶ αὐξομένοιο to explain to the Egyptian audience that this is not the water lily of the same name with which they are more familiar

The Doric dialect of *Id.* 18 and the large admixture of elements from Sappho and perhaps Stesichorus keep Theocritus from emulating Homer in any direct way. Nonetheless, he has returned to Homer's Sparta in Homer's meter and, for all the lyricism of the style, has created in the old epic setting characters in whom the patrons can see a bit of themselves. This now redeemed Helen (*Id.* 18.20),

οἵα Ἀχαιιάδων γαῖαν πατεῖ οὐδεμί' ἄλλα,

is compounded of Homeric heroines like Penelope (*Od.* 21.107),

οἵη νῦν οὐκ ἔστι γυνὴ κατ' Ἀχαιίδα γαῖαν,

and the similarly unique Arsinoe herself (*Id.* 17.128 f.),

. . . τᾶς οὔτις ἀρείων
νυμφίον ἐν μεγάροισι γυνὰ περιβάλλετ' ἀγοστῷ, . . .

By such a vehicle Arsinoe may project herself imaginatively back into the age of heroes—indeed, to the single previous case where the recurrent loss of husbands and thrones only served to enhance the power of a great queen.

The Heracliscus (*Id.* 24)

The *Ptolemy* offers what must be close to an official portrait of Heracles as Ptolemaic ancestor [93] in the Olympian scene where he joins Alexander and Soter for that dullest of symposia (vv. 26-33). For Callimachus in a lighter mood (*Dian.* 146-60), Heracles could retain on Olympus all of the voraciousness and even less of the guile that he had on earth; [94] but in *Id.* 17 we find only the abstemious family man devoting himself to wife and progeny. The *Heracliscus* shows us the youth of what we may call the Ptolemaic Heracles, who is free now of the extremities of appetite, valor, and suffering which in the earlier tradition had chiefly characterized him. In his first agon, against Hera's vengeful snakes, the infant proves himself as heroic as he had been in Theocritus' model, Pindar's *Nemean* 1, but now also notably obliging and obedient to his parents (esp. vv. 56-63), as later to his tutors, whom, against tradition, he does not kill. As cultivated sportsman, athlete at the training table, and

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The peculiar glosses on Theban flora at *Id.* 26.4 and 11 may serve a similar function.

[93] On the cult of Heracles in Egypt, see Visser 39 and 89; for Philadelphus depicted as Heracles: Tondriau, *Cd'E* 23 (1948) 130, and Edgar, *JHS* 26 (1906) 281 f.

[94] On which, see H. Herter, *Kallimachos und Homer* (Bonn 1929) 55 f.

complaisant husband of Hebe, he has become the perfect gentleman. He has, in fact, proved himself in just those activities—love, sport, music, and a little bit of warfare—that we know to have been closest to the heart of Philadelphus himself.

Would the petition to Heracles in fact be addressed to Ptolemy? Such seems to be essentially the case with Zeus and Ptolemy at the end of Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus*, and we know that the monarch generously supported festivals, whose poetic competitions Theocritus mentions at *Id.* 17.112-16.[95] Clearly a poem so centrally concerned with Heracles as sportsman would fit such an occasion admirably or might otherwise be connected to Egyptian gymnasia, of which Heracles was the presiding deity.[96] The city of the *Heracliscus*, so conspicuously unnamed, could by its wonderfully observed ordinariness as easily be Alexandria as mythic Thebes. Heracles' education, beginning with γράμματα, is very like that of a Hellenistic gentleman. Its details, otherwise unfamiliar to us, not only may stem from playful didacticism (particularly well directed: a pedantic catalogue of pedagogues), but also may be a masquerade of the courtiers themselves, for here Theocritus writes about the tutorial positions occupied by people like himself. As he usually does with the Ptolemies and their mythological counterparts, Theocritus keeps the focus off Heracles himself after the first scene, possibly to facilitate the allegory, and concentrates instead on the demigod's parents and tutors. In peripheral details, the correspondence may be very close indeed: Heracles' unique cradle at the very start may recall the strikingly similar account given by Aelian (fr. 285) of Ptolemy I abandoned in a shield. Such shields show up with regularity on Ptolemaic coinage after 285[97] and Callimachus' Apollo takes particular note of them in his celebration of Philadelphus' victory over the Gauls (*Del.* 184 f.).[98] As Gow points out (II. 417-19), the poet's uncommonly precise designation of the time of year, if such it

[95] Wilcken, *Zur Entstehung des hellenistischen Königskultes* 311 n. 5, contends that *Id.* 17 was composed for the Ptolemaieia of 271/0; but see Wilam., *H.D.* II.130.

[96] The evidence is collected by Fraser, II.353 n. 149. It may be worth noting that in the empire the reigning sovereign was associated with Heracles and Hermes as patron of the gymnasium.

[97] Sboronos, Νομίσματα IV pl. XII-XIII.

[98] Callimachus' description may, in fact, indicate that it is the shields of the Gauls which we see on Ptolemaic coinage, as has been argued by H. W. Ritter, "Zum Schild auf den Münzen des Philadelphos," *Schweizer Münzblätter* 25 (1975) 2 f.

is, may bring Heracles' birth into coincidence with Philadelphus', which Theocritus and Callimachus so often celebrate elsewhere. Similarly, ὀψίγονον (v. 31) in the meaning of *born late to one's parents* has less appropriateness for Heracles than for Philadelphus, who is the last and (importantly) only common son of his parents. The adjective, in fact, at Pollux 3.19 is a gloss for ἀγαπητός, which is used of Philadelphus himself (*Id.* 17.64), Helen (*Id.* 18.5), and Adonis (*Id.* 15.149).

It may be well to keep in mind in reading the description of Alcmena's consultation with Teiresias and his revelation of her son's immortality that such a scene would have been familiar to Theocritus' audience in a way that it had not been to Pindar's. For of late oracles had been diagnosing divine parentage in the lords of Egypt in very much the same way. Alexander himself had trekked to the oasis at Siwah and heard from the oracle, it seems, that he was a son of Zeus Ammon. The grateful Rhodians had repeated the inquiry for Ptolemy I with the same results, and from this we may date the beginnings of the dynasty's Olympian career. The Ptolemies, especially Arsinoe II, seem to have given special support to the oracle,[99] perhaps because this first revelation of Alexander's divine father was Egypt's major claim to have figured importantly in his life and to deserve his remains as the focal point of his (and the Ptolemies') cults. The oracle would also have been of interest to the Ptolemies for its association with Dionysus, if such there was.[100] And it would not have been inappropriate to allude to the oracle in a poem on Heracles' infancy and youth, for it was in rivalry with his ancestor that Alexander is said to have gone to Siwah in the first place (Arr. *Anab.* 3.3.2 and Strabo 17.1.43).

Now, we may only be dealing with coincidences here, but they continue. Ptolemy I does record one wonder (if no more) in his history: namely, that two snakes led Alexander to the oasis and back (*apud* Arr. *Anab.* 3.3.5). Could this be the serpentine Psais or his Hellenic counterpart, the Agathos Daimon,[101] perhaps already being incorporated into the cult of Sarapis and later

[99] So Milne, *Studies . . . Griffith* 13-15. For Arsinoe's connections with Ammon, see Cerfaux-Tondriau 217 and Sauneron, *BIFAO* 60 (1960) 83-109, esp. 103 f.

[100] See Nock, *JHS* 48 (1928) 21-30, and Cerfaux-Tondriau 160 f.

[101] See Visser 65 f. and Fraser I.209-11.

virtually the patron deity of Alexandria? [102] The *Alexander Romance* reports that Alexander himself ordered this serpent killed during the building of the city and thereupon built a sanctuary for him. The Agathos Daimon was paired with his female counterpart, Agathe Tyche (as Psais was with Thermuthis), and was closely associated with Zeus. An Alexandrian audience would surely have been reminded of these cults as they heard of the twin snakes of Hera, whose sacrifice constitutes Heracles' first step toward Olympus. In any case, Theocritus has surrounded the fixtures of Pindar's myth with new religious significance. The snakes are presented as φαρμακοί (Gow II. 430) who require quite an intricate rite of purgation. The κακὸν πῦρ (v. 18) of their eyes anticipates the πυρὰ Τραχίνιος (v. 83), which, as Teiresias explains, will translate the hero to heaven.[103] When the infant lays his victims at Amphitryon's feet, he may well be making an offering, but to the wrong father. Teiresias more correctly explains to Alcmena that the final sacrifice should be to Ζηνὶ ... καθυπερτέρῳ (v. 99). These particular details are lacking in Pindar's account. What Theocritus seems to have done, therefore, is to amplify the tale of *Nemean I* to parallel the newly created myths of Alexandria, which, as Gow suggests (II. 418), at a certain level may be the city represented in this poem.

The *Heracliscus* follows the pattern of the courtly *Idylls* in other and more general ways. Alcmena overshadows her husband fully as much as does Berenice in *Idd.* 15 and 17. As is the case with Philadelphus and Helen, Heracles' divinity is congenital, but emerges only gradually as the poem approaches the concluding prayer. In the opening scene, Zeus is nowhere mentioned as the real father and, as in *Id.* 18, comes to figure in the apotheosis first in the role of father-in-law (cf. *Id.* 18.18 and *Id.* 24.84). Heracles, like Philadelphus, is actually the son of the god; but that he is equally the son-in-law may have been a source of amuse-

[102] So W. W. Tarn, "The Hellenistic Ruler-Cult and the Daemon," *JHS* 48 (1928) 218 f. The eighth *Aeneid* makes the same connection between Heracles' throttling of the snakes (v. 289) and the twin serpents of Egyptian cult (the snakes swimming after Cleopatra at Actium at v. 697; in both cases "geminos ... anguis"). Both images reinforce the correspondence between the second and eighth books by providing a rectifying balance to Athena's "gemini ... angues" (2.204 f.), which assail Laocoön and are themselves described in terms strongly reminiscent of *Id.* 24. Compare esp *Aen.* 2.209-11 with *Id.* 24.19-21

[103] J. Stern, "Theocritus' *Idyll* 24," *AJP* 95 (1974) 355-57.

ment to a royal couple who were their own in-laws. Callimachus also suggests this possibility in playing on Heracles' tangled family ties at *Dian.* 149. In *Id.* 24 γαμβρὸς δ' ἀθανάτων κεκλήσεται (v. 84) simultaneously reveals Heracles as son of a god and husband of his sister. The line-ends of the *Idyll*'s fragmentary conclusion in the Antinoe papyrus indicate that it directly addressed the issue of a mortal, θνητός (v. 171), attaining Ὄλ]υμπον (v. 168). Again the mystery is linked to incestuous marriage for ὁμοπάτ[ριον (v. 170) doubtless refers to Hebe. The end of the *Heracliscus*, then, links marriage and apotheosis as strongly as does the end of the *Ptolemy*, in which poem Heracles' marriage quite explicitly anticipates Philadelphus' own.[104]

The reasons not given for Heracles' deification may be equally significant. In *Nemean* 1, his ode to that πολύπονος ἀνήρ Chromius, Pindar had emphasized the mortal side of Heracles, that is, the paternity of Amphitryon and the good works that brought Heracles his Olympian reward. Philadelphus, however, who had both his throne and his immortality by birth, would not relish an Olympus attained by ἔργα, especially when his own were so much less impressive than his father's or Alexander's. Theocritus has skirted this problem before: Heracles, Alexander, and Soter may still drag around their weapons in the Olympus of the *Ptolemy*, but it is clearly family ties which have gotten them there and which remain their chief pleasure now. We have already seen how deftly Theocritus circumvents the topic of heroic feats in the rest of the *Ptolemy* by an Olympian detour. And so it is that blood and marriage in the end redeem the Heracles of *Id.* 24, who can now be shown to be too refined to make an unflattering contrast to the ineffectual Philadelphus. It is not surprising, therefore, that Heracles' valor, like Helen's sexuality in *Id.* 18, should play such a small role in these poems. In both cases it is the Dorian ideal of athleticism that tames or at least diverts attention from their explosive energies.

Like *Id.* 18, the *Heracliscus* returns to the scene of the *Odyssey* to see things somewhat differently. Its unnamed city suggests not only Alexandria, but Ithaca as well. We are reminded of that epic at every point: in the mysterious light that illuminates the house, Amphitryon's arming scene, the slave woman by the mill, and even Alcmena, whose readiness to hear the worst from Teiresias echoes

[104] On the reconstruction of the ending, see most recently Stern 352 n. 12

the similarly frail courage of Telemachus (see Gow *ad* vv. 11 f., 22, 49, 50, 51, 52, and 69). These epic touches have commonly been interpreted merely as burlesque, for which the poem is justly famous. However, two recent interpreters have found in it more serious undertones. Horstmann (57-71) notes that Alcmena and Amphitryon are not only comically unsuited to the heroic events that erupt into their lives, but also more human and sympathetic than in earlier accounts. The old myth has not simply been deflated by its transposition into bourgeois surroundings, but also made more accessible for the contemporary audience. It might also be noted here that the *Heracliscus* moves away from these commonplace realities step by step. The opening scene has broad elements of travesty; but Teiresias' prophecy, though an occasion for some quaint superstition, looks forward to the more serious business of Heracles' heroic destiny, which begins to be realized in the poem's didactic final movement. In this final passage, the heroes reassume something close to their traditional stature. We have already seen Helen and Menelaus in *Id.* 18 making much the same sort of progress toward being something more than an ordinary couple. In addition, Stern has argued that the whole *Idyll* centrally concerns itself with how Heracles confronts death and thereby achieves immortality. He notes that the poem is laced with images of sleep and death and of fire, which, of course, lead up to the pyre on Mt. Oeta; the various manifestations of mortality in the tutors are precisely what Heracles is rising above. His education is a preparation for immortality.

To establish the number of levels on which the poem operates, from travesty to veneration, we need look no further than its first image, the bronze shield of which Amphitryon despoiled Pterelaus. The use of this shield as a cradle sets the tone for the deflation of the heroic by the more insistent demands of domesticity in the first half of the poem. Yet it should be noted that the burlesque is tied more to objects than people. There is no attempt, as in the *Hylas*, to deflate the characters' heroic pretensions, for Amphitryon and Alcmena now have none. Heracles himself escapes this pattern of humor almost altogether. To be sure, the heroic trappings, the miracle, and the epic diction are all wrong for the kind of people Amphitryon and family at first seem; but these incongruities are easily enough forgotten in the poem's latter half. Now, with this first image of the shield, the fact that Amphitryon was out winning

this booty while Zeus was courting Alcmena already calls to mind Zeus' paternity and thereby introduces what Sanchez-Wildberger[105] finds to be the fundamental pattern of humor in the *Idyll*, the paradox of double paternity. Alcmena remains sublimely oblivious to the disparity of her twin sons; Teiresias must know the truth, but wisely avoids mentioning the fact to his client. Thereafter when Alcmena instead of Amphitryon assumes the direction of Heracles' education, she would seem to act on the knowledge that she alone is Heracles' true parent. Yet, as is to be expected in polite society, such irregularities are left in decent obscurity by all concerned. Double parentage and gradually emergent divinity are, as we have seen, themes of immediate interest to the Ptolemies. Moreover, though the shield is laughable here, Heracles will in time learn to wield one in all seriousness (v. 125). The Homeric digression to explain the shield's history seems frivolous at the start, but it will be balanced at the end of the catalogue of tutors by what seems to be a fully serious digression on Castor's banishment by Tydeus (vv. 129-31). Tydeus was also one of the poet's points of contact with Homer at *Id.* 17.54; the Argive setting seems equally crucial in both passages. By the end, therefore, such armaments are presented in a serious light and would have particular meaning for a royal family which had taken the shield as a symbol.

Theocritus is, of course, not trying to beat Homer at his own game. When he begins to take heroic subject matter seriously, he does so in a didactic catalogue closer in style to Hesiod than to Homer. Like the *Helen*, the *Heracliscus* stays well clear of the old epic style in its pure form. Nonetheless, I think we may reasonably see in the poem a desire to give the Ptolemaic mythology the final lustre of a Homeric, or partially Homeric, treatment. Wit saves the poet from presumptuousness: in both *Idd.* 18 and 24 the setting looks more like Phaeacia than Ithaca or Sparta (a pity that no poet dared to make of Arsinoe the perfect Queen Arete that she was!). Yet the heroic world of these two *Idylls* exists not just as travesty or reduction of an older and loftier style. It is self-sustaining and rather charming in its own terms as something quite beyond an assault on the old heroism. After all, shaping the demigods in the image of the current generation of kings in some ways perpetuates that very old tendency among the Greeks that Goethe

[105] *Theokrit-Interp.* 18-21.

labelled "Theomorphism" instead of "Anthropomorphism", the striving "den Menschen zu vergötten, nicht die Gottheit zu vermenschen." [106] Theocritus has simply lowered Olympus sufficiently to make it a comfortable step for the royal imagination. To be sure, he shares Callimachus' taste for deflating the old heroics (most notably in the *Hylas*) [107] and his wicked delight in the *embourgoisement* of myth.[108] But it is equally necessary to see that Theocritus has positive motives in recreating the old heroes, that is, that he aims not to write these characters out of existence, but to give them room to breathe.

The Bacchantes (*Id.* 26)

No Ptolemaic ancestor figures more largely in cult than Dionysus,[109] to whom Theocritus devotes a solemn if puzzling tribute in *Id.* 26. After a brief retelling of the familiar tale of the σπαραγμός of Pentheus, a speaker emerges to hail Dionysus, Semele, and her sisters; proclaim his own piety; and disavow all sympathy for the god's enemies.[110] The format will by now be familiar: what begins as narrative, ends as a hymn. The anaphoric repetitions and especially the couplets (in two balanced sets of six lines) recall the ends of *Idd.* 17 and 18, the hymn of 15, and presumably the missing *envoi* of 24 as well (see above, note 77). It is the mortal parent who is acknowledged at the start (v. 6) and her sisters who

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[106] "Myrons Kuh," in *Goethes Werke*[3] XII, ed. W. Weber and H. J. Schrimpf (Hamburg 1956) 136.

[107] On which, see D. Mastronarde, "Theocritus' Idyll 13: Love and the Hero," *TAPA* 99 (1968) 273-90.

[108] See especially the interpretations of A. Körte, *Die hellenistische Dichtung*[2], rev. P. Händel (Stuttgart 1960) 238 f.; Legrand, *Bucoliques grecs* I.167-69; and Horstmann, esp. 67-71.

[109] Visser 35 f. and 82 f.; J. Tondriau, "La Dynastie ptolémaïque et la religion dionysiaque," *Cd'E* 25 (1950) 283-316; and Fraser I.201-7. We cannot say if the θίασοι of *Id.* 26 might reflect on real precursors of the bands of which Ptolemy IV was to be so passionately fond. See J. Tondriau, "Les Thiases dionysiaques royaux de la cour ptolémaïque," *Cd'E* 21 (1946) 149-56. For the poetry and propaganda centered on the god in that reign, see A. Rostagni, "Neos Dionysos: poeti e letterati alla corte di Tolomeo IV Filopatore," *Atti r. Accad. Sc. Torino* 50 (1914-1915) 989-1013.

[110] On the political implications of the charges of ἀσέβεια and enmity with the gods at the courts of both the Pharaohs and the Ptolemies, see Koenen, *Cd'E* 34 (1959) 106-12. The Ptolemies considered their enemies ἀσεβεῖς, and the king vanquished them as Horus had overcome the enemies of the gods, especially those of Dionysus' counterpart Osiris. Therefore, εὐσεβέων/δυσσεβέων (v. 32) may have far more than a merely religious significance.

dominate the action; Zeus figures only at the end (vv. 33 f.). To be sure, Dionysus is not a demigod in quite the way that Heracles and Helen are. He might, however, have even greater interest for Philadelphus, since he was the only son of Zeus to become a god during his lifetime.[111] Like Helen, Heracles, and Ptolemy, he remains offstage in his own poem. And the poem is very much about apotheosis, for the once mortal Semele and her sisters are hailed equally with Dionysus at the end (v. 35) in a way that suggests this as a hymn to them no less than to him.[112] The daughters of Cadmus will be remembered by women (Καδμεῖαι πολλαῖς μεμελημέναι ἡρωίναις v.36) because of their son and nephew, just as Theocritus' Alcmena is to be for Heracles (σέβας δ' ἔσῃ 'Αργείαισι *Id.* 24.78). No less than it is for Helen, Adonis, and Arsinoe, marriage for Semele is the crucial step in her translation. τὸν ὑπὲρ γᾶς (v. 4) as a gloss on asphodel turns out not to be otiose (*pace* Gow II. 477), but necessary to distinguish the plant from that of the underworld (*Od.* 11.539, 573; 24.13), whence, we are thereby reminded, Semele in some accounts was rescued by her son, in much the way that Ptolemaic queens (Berenice, Philotera, and Arsinoe) and their analogues (Core, Helen, as well as Castor, Adonis, and Osiris) were snatched away from the jaws of death.[113] A representation of her marriage chamber did, we know, figure prominently in Philadelphus' Pompe (Callixenus *apud* Ath. 200b). In *Id.* 26 Ino, Autonoe, and Agave appear first as worshippers in family cult; and, no less than for the Theoi Adelphoi, their piety anticipates the status which the poet implies that they enjoy in cult.

The poem progresses in general from mortal to divine; and, as in the other courtly *Idylls*, the element of divinity at work from the first emerges clearly only in retrospect. In the narrative, the god had only taught (ἐδίδαξ' v. 9) the women the rites he desired; his miracles are nowhere to be seen. The women react with frenzy

[111] Taeger, *Charisma* I.218.

[112] Semele was regularly worshipped with Dionysus (references at Gow II.478), but there is no evidence for the worship of her sisters in cult.

[113] Semele had an ἄνοδος from Hades corresponding to that of Core. The Herois, celebrated every eight years at Delphi, seems to have celebrated this resurrection (Plut. *Mor.* 293d), and at Lerna it was said that Dionysus had descended through the Alcyonian Lake to Hades to bring his mother back up (Paus. 2.37.5); so similarly at Troezen (Paus. 2.31.2) and Samos (Tzetzes *ad* Lycophron 212). See M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung* (Leipzig 1906) 286-90. Dionysus' identification with Osiris would surely give particular currency to the tales of his κατάβασις.

when Pentheus disturbs their secret rites, but they do not seem to have been possessed by the god to the point of hallucination, nor does Pentheus. He has his wits about him as he dies. The women, for their part, do not mistake him for a sacrificial animal, as they do in Euripides' *Bacchae* (vv. 1142, 1196, and 1215). It is instead the singer himself who draws that analogy in a simile (v. 21). With the element of the supernatural eliminated, there remains only a straightforward tale of transgression and punishment, very like the paired tales of Teiresias and Actaeon (Autonoe's son) in Callimachus' *Bath of Pallas*, where the narrative is also set in a ceremonial context. In the *envoi*, however, the singer sees things somewhat differently. He exculpates Cadmus' daughters by suggesting a broader role for the god (ὀρίναντος Διονύσω v. 37) than had earlier been apparent. The call for other victims (vv. 27 ff.), points out how the incident here recounted has been institutionalized into the central and repeated rite of the cult. The rationalistic treatment of myth in the narrative gives way in the *envoi* to the profounder mystery of male birth (v. 34). We are dealing here, as in Theocritus' four other treatments of courtly myth, with a gradual manifestation of divinity and an αἴτιον for rites, here of Dionysus, as before of Helen Dendritis, the Theoi Adelphoi, Adonis, and perhaps Heracles as patron of the Alexandrian penteteric festivals.

Three details of the hymnic *envoi* seem commonly to allude to the birth of Ptolemy II. As Maass [114] suggested, Dionysus' birthplace Dracanus (v. 33) may recall the Dercanum of Cos (Strabo 14.2.19), on which island Philadelphus himself was born. When Callimachus and Theocritus go to such lengths to bring Apollo's birth on Delos into line with that of Ptolemy II on Cos, we may well wonder how long they would overlook the even closer parallel of a divine ancestor's birth on the very same island, even if the parallel was based on a forced coincidence of names. In tampering thus with the god's biography the Ptolemies or their poets may, as often, be imitating the master himself: Alexander's discovery of Nysa, where Dionysus was probably thought to have grown up (Arr. *Anab.* 5.1 f.) was a crucial step in equating Alexander's Eastern triumphs with those of Dionysus.[115] How fitting, then, to have the god's birth on Philadelphus' own Cos. Again, as at

[114] "Theocrits Dionysos aus einer Inschrift erläutert," *Hermes* 26 (1891) 178 f.

[115] On which, see Nock, *JHS* 48 (1928) 24-27.

Ptolemy's birth, we find the eagle from Zeus (*Id.* 17.71-73; cf. Callim. *Jov.* 68 f.), which here serves as a model of piety. Wilamowitz (*Textg.* 212 f.) adduced the tale recounted by Servius (*ad Aen.* 1.394) of the handsome youth Aetos, who during Zeus' Cretan childhood "primus in obsequium Iovis se dedit" and was rewarded by transformation into the eagle.[116] The tale fits nicely with what seem to be the *ministri impuberes* of the following verse in *Id.* 26 (if any meaning can now be divined for this most disputed line in the *Idylls*);[117] with the paralleled births of Ptolemy (*Id.* 17) and Zeus (Callim. *Jov.*); as well as with the very similar story of Ganymede celebrated in Arsinoe's Adonia (*Id.* 15.123 f.), where the child is borne off by Zeus' eagles. Van der Valk[118] objects that the eagle is not a very compelling or obvious example of piety, and his objection would carry considerable weight if the image were being used anywhere but the Alexandrian court. There, however, it would be a familiar fixture and in no need of a gloss.

Finally, Theocritus' profession of piety (v. 30),

αὐτὸς δ' εὐαγέοιμι καὶ εὐαγέεσσιν ἅδοιμι

bears an unmistakable resemblance to the εὐαγέων δὲ καὶ εὐαγέεσσι μελοίμην (Callim. *Del.* 98) of the unborn Apollo, whose next words will refer to Ptolemy's destined birth on Cos. Whether Theocritus is imitating Callimachus here or vice versa, clearly the *Idyll* is to be tied to Alexandrian literary circles, where the poet could hardly treat Dionysiac cult without considering the monarch's vigorous interest in it. To be sure, each of the parallels between the *envoi* and Philadelphus' birth is debatable, but as a group and a very coherent one they are hard to explain in any other way.

A ritual context, if not necessarily in Alexandria, has usually been assumed for this poem, as was indicated at the outset (p. 55). The discoverers of political purges and cannibal banquets in the *Idyll* go wide in thinking that such precision in deciphering correspondences is possible or necessary. The poem must and can only be linked to the Ptolemies by the very considerable extent to which it meshes with the larger cycle of Ptolemaic myth. Details,

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[116] Other instances of the eagle as a model of piety are collected by McKay, *Antichthon I* cf. 55 n. 16 (1967) 24 f.

[117] On the much-discussed vv. 27-31, see Gow II.482 f., as well as, most recently, McKay 22 f., and G. Giangrande, "Hellenistic Poetry and Homer," *AntCl* 39 (1970) 65-73.

[118] "Theocritus XXVI," *AntCl* 34 (1965) 91

like the eagle, with no clear relationship to Dionysian cult as we know it outside of Alexandria turn out to be commonplaces of the dynastic cult. The poem's emphasis on the god's infantile and chthonic aspects directly calls to mind the special prominence of these same aspects in the Alexandrian cult of Dionysus.[119] Scholars who resist the notion that *Id.* 26 presents a serious (if not necessarily sincere) portrait of Dionysus as a just and righteous god fail to note the similar peculiarity of the Adonia presented by Arsinoe as a celebration of marriage, when traditionally the festival may have been rather the opposite.[120] In *Id.* 15 Theocritus is obviously portraying Adonis as the Ptolemies had refashioned him, and so it must be with Dionysus, as also with Heracles and Helen.

In the last two decades, two other interpretations have gained currency which deny any connection to ritual. On the one hand, it has been argued that *Id.* 26 is a purely literary reflection on the myth. Theocritus is seen as a sincere believer reacting to Euripides' *Bacchae* either as too brutal (van Groningen[121]) or as too sympathetic to the god's victims (Carrière[122]). But nearly the opposite case seems evident to van der Valk,[123] who argues that Theocritus, rather than sensitively manipulating the pathos of Euripides' account, has simply minimized it. Wilamowitz (*Textg.* 214) anticipated this quandry in his shrewd warning that the myth of Dionysus was too familiar in too many differing forms to allow us to analyze Theocritus' use of his sources as a clear register of his intent. In any case, interpretation of the poem as a purely literary exercise can hardly explain the obscurity of detail in the *envoi* or the parallels to Ptolemaic cult that we have seen.

Second, because this poem is Hellenistic and difficult it is explained by van der Valk and Giangrande as an exercise in irony. Its final pieties are indeed not quite what we expect from a sophisticate like Theocritus; as McKay[124] points out, in a courtly poem

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[119] These aspects of Dionysus would seem to have been enhanced by his connection with Sarapis. See Cerfaux-Tondriau 214 and Fraser I.205 f., 255 f.

[120] See in general M. Detienne, *Les Jardins d'Adonis* (Paris 1972).

[121] "Les Bacchantes de Théocrite," in *Misc. Rostagni* 338-49.

[122] "Théocrite et Les Bacchantes," *Pallas* 6 (1958) 7-10, and "Sur le message des Bacchantes," *AntCl* 35 (1966) 118-39.

[123] *AntCl* 34 (1965) 93-95.

[124] *Antichthon* 1 (1967) 28.

they need not be. Theocritus may strain belief with his chaste Helen, well-behaved Heracles, and heroic Ptolemy, but they are not merely *jeux d'esprit*. After all, it is not candor that we are to expect from courtly poems. And the sentiments of this poem are not so exaggerated as to force us into assuming irony. The scene is grisly, but not demonstrably more so than *The Bacchae*. Giangrande puts great weight on the abruptness of the turn, the *Umkehrung*, between narrative and *envoi*: where traditionally we would expect an expression of sympathy from messenger or poet, the singer produces quite the reverse, a disavowal of sympathy. Yet have we not been prepared for these sentiments from the first by the strong and consistent element of theodicy throughout the poem? Where in Euripides, for instance, Pentheus died as the god's helpless and pathetic victim, here he has his wits about him. In fact, the youth is not just spying on the Maenads at their hymns, but intruding, apparently with care and premeditation, on ὄργια fully exposed. The women, having done as they are told (vv. 9 and 37), are vindicated and deified at the end, rather than undergoing the horrifying ἀναγνώρισις and repudiation which they suffer at the hands of Euripides' god—a grim tale admittedly, but surely too familiar to cause many nightmares (*pace* van Groningen), especially in capsule form. In any case, it takes more than a picnic to launch a cult. In all, if the sentiments of the poem are compatible with Dionysiac cult and the Ptolemaic interest in it, it seems a very long way around indeed to assume that Theocritus must with opaque irony be travestying phenomena in which, we may recall, he interests himself elsewhere only when the Ptolemies themselves are interested. With religious, no less than heroic, subjects we must ask what would lure him into this territory in the first place. Since Theocritus elsewhere thanks Philadelphus directly for sponsoring the sacred contests of Dionysus (*Id.* 17.112), it is hard to imagine that a poem concerning the cult of Dionysus could be composed in Alexandria, as the echoes of Callimachus suggest that this one was, without some connection to the chief sponsor of that cult.

Here, as before, I sense advice delivered with the praise. Philadelphus may see as much as he will of himself in the image of Dionysus.[125] His own Pompe had demonstrated Alexander's

[125] For the possible identification of Philadelphus with Dionysus in sculpture, see C. C. Edgar, *JHS* 26 (1906) 281 f. For Soter, see B. Segall,

identification with the god; Ptolemy IV was to take the role of Νέος Διόνυσος to lunatic extremes (see above, note 109). But what Philadelphus is invited to see in that ancestor is in one respect quite different from what the Pompe had shown to the masses or even what Euripides made of the god, who is in *The Bacchae* very much the oriental invader. Already Herodotus (2.29, 42, 49, 144, and 156) had noted Dionysus' similarity to Osiris; the cult of Sarapis now gave him a crucial role in the Ptolemies' program of cultural syncretism. In reaction to this, Theocritus makes Dionysus, as he had Adonis, exclusively Hellenic, a son of Thebes with no sign of Eastern wanderings. This god needs no ecstasy or miracles, merely instruction to foster piety and retribution. Dionysus gains thereby the kind of dignity that Theocritus visits upon Helen and Heracles. Is there not an element of special pleading in the reduction of the god to a figure of justice and power alone—not a god of foreign mysteries, but the son of the Greek god of justice? Theocritus has refashioned Dionysus not only to be susceptible to the king's vanity, but perhaps to lure that vanity from the oriental to the Hellenic.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the features which link the *Helen*, the *Heracliscus*, and *The Bacchantes* to one another and to the other poetry of the Ptolemaic court just as distinctly set them apart from the rest of the *Idylls*. As far as we can tell, they are occasional verse: an epithalamium, a competition piece, a hymn. As such, they have no real counterparts in the rest of the corpus.[126] The myths of these three poems, along with those of the *Ptolemy* and *The Adoniazusae*, are all etiological; in every instance they explain the origin of a cult or, perhaps in Heracles' case, isolympic games. Otherwise Theocritus stands out among the major Alexandrians for his indifference to etiology. Where Apollonius recounts the rape of Hylas as an explanation for the cult of the youth, the founding of Cius, and (indirectly) the erection of an extraordinary monument for the Boreades (*Argon.* 1.1304-9

"Realistic Portraiture in Greece and Egypt: A Portrait Bust of Ptolemy I," *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 9 (1946) 53-67. The extent to which Alexander had encouraged the identification of himself with the god is disputed; see Nock, *JHS* 48 (1928) 21-30, and Cerfaux-Tondriau 156-61.

126 The most similar cases would be the *Idylls* addressed to Aratus (*Id.* 6) and Nicias (*Idd.* 11 and 13), apparently as a form of poetic epistle, and *Id.* 28, written to accompany a distaff for Nicias' wife.

and 1344-57). Theocritus excises the αἴτια from his account in *Id.* 13, with an explanation to Nicias that the connection of the myth to their own time is rather that Heracles is "just like us." In Apollonius' telling (*Argon.* 2.1 ff.), Polydeuces' boxing match with the giant Amycus results ultimately in the purging of the Propontis of the marauding Bebryces—a small note in history; but in *Id.* 22 the fisticuffs, though diverting, accomplish nothing much and lead only to another episode. And, with the possible exception of Helen Dendritis, the cults whose birth Theocritus does explain (Berenice-Aphrodite; Adonis; the Theoi Soteres; Heracles; Dionysus; possibly the Theoi Adelphoi) are all of immediate interest to the court. The themes of marriage, immortality, and their interconnectedness, which figure so largely in these five poems are, needless to say, not a Theocritean preoccupation elsewhere.

With these five *Idylls* we also come nearly to the limits of Theocritus' interest in saga. All that lies beyond are the Argonautic tales of the *Hylas* and the *Hymn to the Dioscuri*, which are themselves to be located at no great distance from the court insofar as they witness to a relationship, be it amicable or contentious, with the royal tutor Apollonius. Elsewhere in the *Idylls* Theocritus favors the figures that he doubtless brought with him from Sicily: Daphnis (*Idd.* 1 and 7), Comatas (*Id.* 7), the amorous Cyclops (*Idd.* 6 and 11), and the ordinary folk of the urban and rural mimes. These, especially Daphnis and Comatas, he handles with an obliquity worthy of Callimachus himself. The myths of saga, however, he presents rather differently, as straightforward retellings of familiar tales—the result of much imagination, some wit, and fewer trips to the library. As far as authentic detail is concerned, to compose the narrative of *Id.* 26 a poet would need a copy of Euripides' *Bacchae* and an eye for landscape. The first half of *Id.* 24 comes just as directly out of Pindar's *Nemean* 1. Theocritus' innovations in the myths are not at all the startling turns, inversions, and obfuscations that we customarily expect from an Alexandrian man of letters, but only modifications sufficient to make the old tales compatible with Ptolemaic myth. The engrafting of veneration for Berenice and Arsinoe onto the Adonis myth in *Id.* 15 demonstrates this process. It is perfectly understandable that Theocritus, when drawn away from home territory, should operate less deftly and evasively. And, as *The Charites* shows, the battle of wits is one that

the poet in addressing the monarch might do well to lose. Even Callimachus, despite his radical distaste for the commonplace, concocts his praises for the Ptolemies out of the most familiar sorts of texts. His *Hymn to Zeus* rehearses the Homeric and Hesiodic wisdom on monarchy, human and divine. His *Hymn to Delos* derives from the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*. The beginning of the hymn on the marriage of Arsinoe (fr. 392 Pf.) seems strikingly direct; the lament on her death (fr. 228 Pf.) creates a dramatic scene with a simplicity of outline rarely seen in his work. Both poets, then, avoid troubling the patrons with mythological obscurantism. We can, to be sure, have no more than a rough and uncertain impression of such broad tendencies, and only with Alexandrian verse can we put any weight at all on the uniqueness of seeing the familiar. Yet in the corpus of a poet whose most basic impulse seems to be to break new ground, the few times that conventional myths are used unmistakably stand out and remind us that the Ptolemies themselves bothered to tamper with only the most familiar and popular sorts of myths. The old, familiar, and noble faces of Helen, Heracles, and Dionysus might never have emerged into the otherwise novel and earthy world of the *Idylls* did they not to some extent bear the soft and ferocious features of the Theoi Adelphoi themselves.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CITY

Of the numbers of poets who had a hand in lifting the Ptolemies to Olympus, Theocritus alone leaves a record of the view downward from the court, the long prospect stretching from the throne of Zeus out to dusty suburban lanes. It is with him that the city of Alexandria enters literature. He came to a city endowed only with myths of its own recent creation, for men still living could recall a time when its divine founder was still just a man, when Sarapis had never been heard of, and when the newest Olympian, Ptolemy I, was still scoffing at those who hailed him as a god. Alexandria was like a colony without a mother city, receptive to immigrants from all Greek cities, but with sure claims to the traditions of none. It could claim its own great poets. Yet Callimachus, always a true son of Cyrene, remained proud of precisely the kind of heritage that Alexandria could not provide its citizens (*Ap.* 74-96). Rhodes would finally claim the city's most eminent native poet, Apollonius. Even Theocritus himself never pretended to be other than Syracusan; but it was, in fact, his Sicilian background that prepared him uniquely well to give Alexandria and its people an identity in poetry.

Theocritus brought with him the humorous realism of the Sicilian mime. The scholiasts (*ad Idd.* 2 and 11) assure us that he follows Sophron as a student of ordinary life.[1] But what Theocritus made of mime, it could not have been before, for he expands it to depict the whole social spectrum from pickpockets to kings, and to embody all levels of cultural attainment, from the high style of Homer down to the language of the streets. He encompasses the varieties of life in the vast new city in a single literary form, which in its own modest way supplies a unifying perspective on the increasingly centrifugal pressures of a mass society.[2] Not surprising-

[1] On Theocritus' debt to Sophron, see Legrand 126-40; S. Eitrem, "Sophron und Theokrit," *SymbOslo* 12 (1933) 10-38; Gow II.33 f., 246, 265 f.; and J. Ławińska, "Echa Sofrona i Epicharma w twórczości Teokryta," (Quid Theocritus Sophroni Epicharmoque debuerit)," *Eos* 54 (1964) 74-86.

[2] This is, of course, a view that can be appreciated only from the upper reaches of society, and even in labelling these pieces "mimes" we must

ly, it is the Ptolemies themselves whom he presents as the central cohesive force not only politically, but also culturally.

It cannot, therefore, safely be assumed that *Idd.* 14 and 15 are simply mimes in the way that Herodas' poems are, but with just a bit of panegyric engrafted. To be sure, the characters of Theocritus' urban poems are types very like those of Middle and New Comedy and of Herodas' *Mimiambi*: the despairing lover, the *irrisor amoris*, the virago. The characters may indeed start out as such; but, as we have seen, all of the courtly poems are deceptively simple in their beginnings. Theocritus' cityfolk all do ultimately show themselves capable of rising above self-absorption so as to comprehend, if imperfectly, realities beyond their immediate experience and thereby make a fleeting contact with history. This is scarcely typical of mime as we know it elsewhere. Though Theocritus' chattering Syracusan émigrées, Gorgo and Praxinoa, may be obsessed with money and may appear grasping at times, it is obviously not his intent merely to exemplify the psychology of miserliness through them, well as he understands it (cf. *Id.* 16). For in Arsinoe's palace the women show themselves capable of perceiving wealth without covetousness and seeing it as a necessary part of the royal *gloire* and, in the king's hands, as a source of prosperity for such as they. By the end they prove to be serviceable observers of a world far more complicated than the narrow realities which define their natures. Though *Id.* 14 begins as a perfectly conventional dialogue on love, it departs the usual world of mime through its sure sense of when private fancies should give way to engagement in the public life. By the end Aeschinas and Thyonicus are talking seriously and sensibly about Ptolemy. Indeed, as is often the case with Theocritus' herdsmen, the simplicity of the natures of his city dwellers somewhat conceals the complexity of the phenomena which they witness for us.

I have already discussed how *Id.* 15 in its gradual movement from the mundane to the exalted, from humor to religious revelation follows the pattern characteristic of the mythological poems. Though *Id.* 14 directs itself finally to panegyric rather than hymn, it clearly reflects what is fundamentally the same strategy of praise. The comparison of Herodas' mimes is instructive here, for even when they direct compliments to the Ptolemies (1.30), they do so in

keep in mind that they are by no means meant for a popular audience. See A. Świderek, "Le Mime grec en Égypte," *Eos* 47 (1954) 63-74.

passing and continue on with a primary concern with ἠθοποιία.[3] They do not ultimately open out to history, as do *Idd.* 14 and 15, nor end with a tone a good deal more elevated than that with which they began.

Idd. 14 and 15 also in one sense concern Theocritus' own role in the new city, and indeed in some ways explain his presence there. Gorgo and Praxinoa bringing their broad Doric vowels to Arsinoe's court directly parallel Theocritus himself as he introduces his Syracusan dialect and a native Sicilian art form. *Id.* 14 comparably portrays Aeschinas hearing the call to Ptolemaic service; so, obviously, had Theocritus. Just as Sophron wrote men's mimes and women's mimes, Theocritus writes in these two mimes tributes to Ptolemy II and Arsinoe which confine themselves respectively to the male and female perspective and present worlds that are, as we shall see, in some ways mirror images of one another. Though *Id.* 14 is not set in Alexandria, it complements *Id.* 15 in dramatizing the relationship of the Ptolemies to the populations that they rule. In both mimes, as in *Id.* 16, Theocritus uses his moment of self-presentation to the court to suggest what art is or should be in this new society and, as often, what is to be done with Homer.

Aeschinas and Thyonicus (Id. 14)

Id. 14 starts at the greatest imaginable remove from royal eulogy—in a purely conventional exchange between an afflicted lover and his sensible, but amused friend. Aeschinas is the standard Theocritean lover, who is sentimental to the core and much confused by his own romantic illusions. He was mad for Cynisca; but, as he laments to Thyonicus, at a fancy rural symposium she failed to pledge him as her lover and revealed her infidelity. Since then he has taken pains to display the 'symptoms of love', the formulaic syndrome of emaciation, moustache, and unkempt lovelocks.[4] Yet he is no more adept at this charade than he was at keeping a lover or at hosting parties; somehow the difference between the real and the seeming consistently eludes him. He failed in the first place to spot the symptoms of real affliction in Cynisca when she loved another. Though he affects a highly colored language of

[3] Cf. the judgment of I. C. Cunningham in Herodas, *Mimiambi* (Oxford 1971) 57.

[4] For this reason F. Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Edinburgh 1972) 171-73, would associate the poem with the genre which he labels 'symptoms of love'.

proverb and animal parable, he was slow to grasp that Cynisca means "bitch" and failed to figure out, when one of his fellow symposiasts tauntingly asked the flustered Cynisca, "Have you seen a wolf?" (v. 22), that the reference was to Lycus, "Wolf," her new paramour. Now Aeschinas has tired of the role of forsaken lover and sets his thoughts toward a cure. The clear-sighted Thyonicus therefore proposes service to Ptolemy, whom he eulogizes. His panegyric must be seen as more than an incidental tag at the end of the poem, for, as Stern [5] has recently pointed out, it marks a movement from Aeschinas' romantic bafflement not only to reality, but to the substantial historical reality of Ptolemy, who has precisely the kind of acuity that Aeschinas lacks (v. 62): "Knows his friend, and knows his enemy even better."

The disposition of material in *Id.* 14 resembles that of *The Charites* in that Theocritus' approach to the throne is circuitous and marked by a gradual, almost imperceptible raising of the tone. Again Theocritus accomplishes this shift by working from one poetic voice to another, in this case from Aeschinas to his more level-headed friend, and by using the scene-within-a-scene to segregate incompatible elements. In *Id.* 16 Theocritus' fictive harangue to his chorus of critics allows him to rehearse some essential and unpleasant thoughts about covetousness and Philistinism without quite preaching to his royal audience in any direct way. Here Aeschinas' sad account of the symposium supplies the poem with the liveliness and color expected of a mime and, indeed, constitutes the fable of the piece. We may for that reason hardly notice the extent to which his conversation with Thyonicus happens in a vacuum. The setting is clearly not Egypt. More we cannot say—not the place, the circumstances, the time. And where Aeschinas is a memorable type, Thyonicus emerges as little more than the voice of reason, proof against the mystifications of the Pythagoreans (vv. 5 f.) no less than against Aeschinas' morbid sentimentality. Though the essence of mime is its low-life setting, Thyonicus remains singularly untainted by his milieu, so that his panegyric of Ptolemy is not in the slightest compromised by the meanness of the setting or by any viciousness in his own character.[6] Theocritus

[5] "Theocritus' *Idyll* 14," *GRBS* 16 (1975) 52-58.

[6] If anything, more of Theocritus' personal view of the king may show through than is quite believable from Thyonicus, as is noted by A. Rostagni, *Poeti alessandrini* (Turin 1916) 71 f., and H. Beckby, *Die griechischen*

has not forgotten his stylistic tricks for keeping discordant tones at a safe distance from one another in a poem.

The praises of Ptolemy seem at first sight precisely the kind of bald, artless flattery so strenuously avoided in other Alexandrian poetry (vv. 61 ff.):

> εὐγνώμων, φιλόμουσος, ἐρωτικός, εἰς ἄκρον ἁδύς,
> εἰδὼς τὸν φιλέοντα, τὸν οὐ φιλέοντ' ἔτι μᾶλλον,
> πολλοῖς πολλὰ διδούς, αἰτεύμενος οὐκ ἀνανεύων,
> οἷα χρὴ βασιλῆ'.

Such a conversation doubtless could have taken place, for Ptolemy's fame as a paymaster was spreading through the Mediterranean at about this time.[7] Yet we must not trust this apparent simplicity too far, for in fact the dramatic setting is very precisely calculated to make the most innocuous sort of praises seem credible and sufficient. Theocritus voices his admiration through characters who are at a safe remove from the political realities of Alexandria and need not, therefore, concern themselves with the ambiguities of the religious relationship evolving between monarchs and their subjects. We can for the moment forget about the new gods. Aeschinas and Thyonicus belong to the class of free and perhaps moderately prosperous men whose opinions traditionally carried most weight. Yet because they are foreigners, the fact that such as they had been disenfranchised in the new Ptolemaic autocracy can tactfully be omitted from the picture. It might not be entirely proper for Alexandrians to be judging the monarch quite so frankly. Even though the two men are discussing military service, Thyonicus makes no unjustified claims about Ptolemy as a general. But his omission can also be explained by the setting, for Thyonicus is commending Ptolemy to an audience, Aeschinas, who will most readily be moved by assurances of his culture and gallantry. Of course, Philadelphus himself put greatest weight on these qualities. But the whole military context of the end of *Id.* 14 keeps him from seeming entirely the playboy. The setting, then, allows a great many sensitive topics to go unmentioned without risking the appearance of slight or partial approval. Given their natures and backgrounds, the dramatic characters cannot be expected to go

Bukoliker (Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 49; Meisenheim am Glan 1976) 449.

[7] See W. S. Ferguson, *Hellenistic Athens* (London 1911) 177 f.

further in their compliments. What results is a profile which, as Nauhardt [8] observes, might fit a monarch from the fifth century equally well. There is no sign in it of what is impressive and perverse in the new Hellenistic empires, that is, of the extremes which prove so troublesome to the poet. How Ptolemy's rule has proved to be something new in the scheme of things cannot yet interest Thyonicus. At this distance he may view Ptolemy with comradely admiration and with the one quality perhaps most precious, yet most difficult to achieve at court, intimacy. Where the *Ptolemy* does full credit to the monarch's godlike stature among his own subjects, *Id.* 14 steps back far enough to treat him on a human scale, so that the qualities attributed to Ptolemy can be those of the man, as well as those of the king. The gradual resolution of Aeschinas' private conflicts points toward an easy and honorable relationship between the king and his minions, for paradoxically the personal relationships in this poem are conceived in political terms and vice versa. The faithless Cynisca has reduced Aeschinas to being of no account, like the wretched Megarians (v. 49); his terms are historical. Though mercenary service entails submission to a stringent hierarchy, he pictures it in egalitarian terms (vv. 55 f.): "Your soldier is not the worst of men, nor yet the first, maybe, but as good as another." At the end, the supreme despot Ptolemy recommends himself for his kindliness, culture, gallantry, and generosity—the kind of human qualities that Aeschinas found so sorely lacking in love.

The characterization of Ptolemy as φιλόμουσος is by no means incidental here, for *Id.* 14, like Theocritus' two other urban mimes, reflects a profound curiosity about the intersection of literature and life. The society over which Ptolemy presided was as polarized culturally as it was politically. If the conversations of herdsmen and of the urban bourgeoisie had suddenly started attracting literary interest, it was precisely because they now seemed so very remote from the rarefied atmosphere of court circles. Yet Theocritus has the singular capacity in portraying the popular imagination to make the huge disparities of taste between the elite and the common people seem benign, in much the way that he has neutralized and submerged the issue of political inequality. Even if the culture is in fact flying off in many different directions, Theocritus presents

[8] *Das Bild des Herrschers in der griechischen Dichtung* (Berlin 1940) 90.

the Ptolemies as a force to draw things together. And, most unexpectedly, the language of the streets provides Theocritus a further means to come to terms with the troublesome ghost of Homer. For clearly all levels of society carried forward the Homeric tradition as a baggage of clichés, proverbs, and misremembered phrases. Taking this decayed tradition as a background, the poet can more easily heroize the Ptolemies in a way that seems authentic.

The levels of popular culture, urban and rural, preoccupy Theocritus throughout the *Idylls*. Few readers can forget his sorceress Simaetha in *Id.* 2 as she tries to make of herself another Circe or Ariadne. Having rather poignantly taken for herself models much too grand for her very ordinary circumstances, she cannot quite get them straight: she invokes both Medea and Perimede (v. 16) without realizing, as the bright philologists of the Museum would surely have known, that the latter seems to be only an alternate name for the former. As a fledgling witch she encounters unexpected difficulties in keeping both the rites and the chant going at once, nor has she noticed that she is contaminating a spell to destroy the faithless Delphis with one to bring him back to her. Her language shows comparable fluctuation between that literary world, the world of heroes, into which she is trying to project herself—"when the steeds of rosy Dawn were bearing her swiftly up the sky from Ocean" (vv. 147 f.)—and the world that she actually knows—"all my fair body grew stiff as it were a doll's" (v. 110). Theocritus' herdsmen, who "live above their intellectual means," [9] are also given to sudden leaps upward in style, as colloquialisms, obscenities, and epic usages regularly collide with one another in the language of the bucolic poems.[10] But the linguistic mosaic of the rural poems produces a distancing effect very different from what we find in the urban mimes. For the herdsman figure is a self-conscious and witty fiction, half coterie poet and entirely rustic—a magnificent impossibility. Simaetha and the like are less coyly artificial and represent, I believe, a comparatively straight-

[9] B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, trans. T. Rosenmeyer (Oxford 1953) 286.

[10] On Theocritus' incongruous use of Homer, see the various passages analyzed by G. Serrao, *Problemi di poesia alessandrina I: studi su Teocrito* (Rome 1971) 91-108; G. Fabiano, "Fluctuation in Theocritus' Style," *GRBS* 12 (1971) 534-36; G. Giangrande, "Theocritus' Twelfth and Fourth Idylls: A Study in Hellenistic Irony," *QUCC* 12 (1971) 108 f.; and R. Garson, "An Aspect of Theocritean Humor," *AJP* 68 (1973) 296 f.

forward attempt to portray the incongruities which in fact do characterize the popular imagination. The variations in Simaetha's diction can be traced back to her shifting moods. Her ornate description of dawn, for instance, ushers in the last act of her tragedy; a certain elevation is in order here. She uses images close at hand, such as that of the doll or of a baby whimpering in its sleep, when she is caught off guard by the painful memory of her first passion. Similarly, the snatches of Homer and the tragedians that we find in the language of Aeschinas or the Syracusan women seem well ossified into cliché, very like the fragments of Shakespeare and the King James Bible which color the speech of speakers of English who as readers are innocent of both. Real people might use such words.

Aeschinas is no less given to literary posturing than is Simaetha. In affecting the 'symptoms of love', he patterns his behavior on conventions which flourish only in poetry. Predictably, Thyonicus does not for an instant find them convincing, but at once draws the parallel to unnatural sorts like the Pythagoreans, who insist on valuing books over bread. The elaborateness of the symposium that Aeschinas hosted and the detail in which he recounts it both reflect his aspiration toward elegance and betray the foolishness of his pretensions. As Dover [11] notes, his incoherence catches the tones of real speech: "The Argive and I, and the Thessalian horse-trainer Agis, and Kleonikos—we were drinking—the soldier,—on the farm, at my place." As he works up to the climax of his account, Aeschinas begins to echo, gratingly, the language of Achilles himself.[12] Cynisca, he reports, broke down into tears (vv. 32 f.),

> . . . θαλερώτερον ἢ παρὰ ματρί
> παρθένος ἑξαετὴς κόλπω ἐπιθυμήσασα.

Just so Achilles compares Patroclus to a small girl crying and tugging at her mother's robe (*Il.* 16.7 ff.). Later when Aeschinas had struck her, she flew off faster than a swallow, and of the swallow he notes (vv. 39 f.),

> μάστακα δοῖσα τέκνοισιν ὑπωροφίοισι χελιδών
> ἄψορρον ταχινὰ πέτεται βίον ἄλλον ἀγείρειν.

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11 *Theocritus* (Basingstoke and London 1971) 190.

12 Cf. the observations of J. Stern, *GRBS* 16 (1975) 56 f., on the shift in tone.

Achilles figures his own sufferings for the Achaians in nearly the same terms (*Il.* 9.323 f.). Legrand (138 and 363) confesses himself a bit disturbed by the inappropriateness of these figures, and rightly so. For Aeschinas here distorts heroic diction as grievously as he does the paradigm of manly conduct set by the son of Peleus. He has only the dimmest grasp of what his images mean, for the figure of the selfless mother swallow draws sympathy toward Cynisca that he surely cannot want her to have. His asyndeton leaves the simile awkwardly, if not humorously, juxtaposed to another poorly controlled image (v. 38): "Let her tears flow as big as apples." The joke on Aeschinas is obvious and, indeed, most of Theocritus' comic lovers do work themselves up to the ultimate folly of heroic pretensions. For example, the hapless goatherd of *Id.* 3 climaxes his appeal to Amaryllis by a reckless incursion into mythology, in which he compares himself successively to Adonis, Endymion, and Iason, without recalling that love proved fatal to all of them.[13] The Cyclops' attempts at the high style in *Id.* 11 fall just as flat.

Aeschinas' clumsy evocation of Homer does, nonetheless, lead us somewhere, for Achilles is customarily invited into the *Idylls* only to make way for his modern counterparts, such as Hiero in *Id.* 16 and Ptolemy in *Id.* 17. Ptolemy waits here as well. After Aeschinas has so amusingly gotten everything wrong, Thyonicus enters with perfect good sense and no pretensions. In the manly simplicity of his sentiment he hits squarely on the most noble tones of Greek militarism (vv. 66 ff.): ". . . if you can stand firm on both your feet (ἐπ' ἀμφοτέροις δὲ βεβακώς) to meet a stout man's charge, then off with you to Egypt." Such are the tones of Tyrtaeus' exhortation to valor (e.g. ἀλλά τις εὖ διαβὰς μενέτω ποσὶν ἀμφοτέροισι fr. 10.31 B. and ὅστις ἀνὴρ διαβὰς ἐν προμάχοισι μένῃ / νωλεμέως fr. 12.16 f. B.). We are clearly not meant to think that Thyonicus is pointing an allusion, but rather that the sentiment itself is timeless. In voicing it, Thyonicus brings the poem in line with the oldest and most respected values of Greek culture—in polar opposition to the studied decadence of Aeschinas' demeanor at the start. Without such careful presentation, an exhortation to military service couched in terms of the old Spartan militarism could have rung false, for the noble word "soldier," which until the fifth century would normally have indicated a free citizen fighting for his city, is now

[13] On his shift of style, see C. Segal, "Adonis and Aphrodite: Theocritus, *Idyll* III, 48," *AntCl* 38 (1969) 87 f.; and Fabiano, *GRBS* 12 (1971) 534 f

being used for itinerant mercenaries. Yet the debasement of the soldier's role does not here readily come to mind, for the foolish Aeschinas makes Thyonicus' advice seem by comparison unquestionably wise and noble. Again it is Ptolemy who draws things together. Aeschinas may have little capacity to integrate literature and life; he is too easily confused. But at the other end of society, Ptolemy can be at once a great ruler and a great patron of the arts. The implicit understanding is that his acuity as a leader has not dulled his ear for poetry.

The Adoniazusae (*Id.* 15)

If the conversation in *Id.* 14 drifts toward a pragmatic grasp of reality, the journey of the Syracusan women in *Id.* 15 takes them in the opposite direction, from dreary domesticity toward the fanciful splendors of Arsinoe's Adonis festival. Harsh as Gorgo and Praxinoa may be toward husbands, children, and slaves, they are sentimental enough to be moved by the lovely tale of Aphrodite's love for Adonis, for which Gorgo pronounces the benediction, χαῖρε, Ἄδων ἀγαπατέ (v. 149)—without quite forgetting that her husband is probably already grousing about his lunch. The tapestries, the tableau, the hymn are all gotten up for the public consumption by Arsinoe and her artists; they can all be viewed with a certain wry detachment. Very like *Id.* 14, this mime is a witty exercise in looking downward from the heights of the court to imagine what the view back upward might be for the groundlings. Yet the handling of the Ptolemaic myths is a serious enough business in itself, as was argued in the preceding chapter, and the action of the mime as a whole demonstrates how these myths bring cohension to an increasingly diffuse culture.

Id. 15 opens with a profile of the fragmentation of urban life. Praxinoa's husband moves the household farther and farther out onto the edge of the city and away from her friends. The crowds, the chariots, the soldiers' hobnailed boots all make social calls increasingly hazardous. Praxinoa reflects all of the stresses of the confined housewife as she lashes out at Gorgo for visiting so rarely, at her husband for bungling the marketing, at her maid for carelessness, and even at her infant for crying when she leaves him at home. As the women make their way to Ptolemy's palace, Praxinoa reveals further that she hates soldiers, horses, and the native Egyptians (pickpockets all of them!). When a stranger in the crowd rebukes

her for her ceaseless chatter and broad Doric vowels, she is only too happy to mount a sharp and chauvinistic defense of her Syracusan heritage. The tightly integrated community of the πόλις has fragmented into the polar extremes of the ὄχλος, the mob, on the one hand—Praxinoa compares them to ants (v. 45) and pigs (v. 73)—and the isolated individual on the other.[14] We know what is unique about Praxinoa down to her phobias about horses and snakes, but the facets of her individuality seem equally symptoms of her maladjustment to her surroundings and of the extent to which she is lost in a faceless crowd.

In moving toward the center of things, toward the palace, Praxinoa and Gorgo are joined by many other worshippers, some of them friendly (v. 72). The mob can then consolidate for a moment into a congregation commonly attending to the myth of Adonis, with its promises of immortality and prosperity. Praxinoa can forget herself for the moment to admire the skill that went into making the Adonis tableau and can even feel some attraction toward the figure of the beautiful youth. The hymn singer completes this sense of convergence in noting how Arsinoe's offering to Adonis has been joined by those of the rest of the people, as well as coverlets from Miletus and perfume from Syria. These fantasies may be pure escapism, but they create a time and place, the festival, where the diffuse elements of metropolitan life come together and begin to make sense. The mass culture here depicted undeniably does strip the citizen of certain elements of autonomy and freedom which would have been enjoyed by at least some people in the age of the πόλις. As in *Id.* 14, Theocritus may be attempting to neutralize this issue—here by choosing women as observers of the new society, for their political status would be little different back in Syracuse or even back in the fifth century. They cannot be expected to penetrate very far into the new political and religious realities. What Theocritus maps out for us is a society which at its center intersects with Olympus. Arsinoe, after all, is celebrating Aphrodite in gratitude for the deification of Berenice. For the common man the theocentricity of this society supports the widening popular hopes for immortality, of which Adonis' triumph over death is but one expression.

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[14] On the emerging sense of individualism and alienation in this period, see C. Schneider, *Kulturgeschichte des Hellenismus* I (Munich 1967) 72-75, and C. Meillier, "Les Poètes hellénistiques et la société," *L'Information littéraire* 22 (1970) 170.

The trip to Ptolemy's palace transforms for the moment Gorgo's and Praxinoa's attitude toward all the important issues of life: money, clothes, and men. Praxinoa, for instance, is so ferocious about the issue of money at the start that she views even the splendors of the Ptolemies with hardheaded realism. After all, it is easy for *them* with all their money to put on a good show: ἐν ὀλβίω ὄλβια πάντα (v. 24). She is less blasé before the spectacle itself. What the scene represents is how the hard and exact systems of exchange, which housewives watch so closely, break down in proximity to the Ptolemies and their myths. The people bring their offering to Adonis, hence indirectly to the monarchs, who give the festival and who are implicated in the myth. The donors gain thereby the blessings of Adonis, who generates prosperity and thereby parallels the royal family, for whom the same beneficence was claimed more directly in the *Ptolemy*. From Adonis and the Ptolemies, then, felicity emanates outward. After the hymn Gorgo is moved to temper her practicality with an appreciation of art (v. 146):

> ὀλβία ὅσσα ἴσατι, πανολβία ὡς γλυκὺ φωνεῖ.

The steady elevation of tone throughout the *Helen* similarly works from the maidens' teasing the "lucky groom," ὄλβιε γάμβρ' (v. 16), to the ἄφθιτον ὄλβον (v. 52) for which they beseech Zeus at the end. In *Id.* 15 as well, ὄλβος gradually acquires a nobler meaning and is shown in Egyptian society at large to derive ultimately from the royal house—surely a comforting notion for monarchs who kept so much of that ὄλβος for themselves.

Gorgo and Praxinoa understandably interpret their world largely in terms of clothes. Where a man might note soldiers' weapons, Gorgo perceives rather their shoes and cloaks. Tightfisted as she is about household accounts, Praxinoa has invested a truly heroic sum (two minas) in the fabric for her dress and is distressed by nothing so much as when her shawl is torn by the crowd. In the palace the first thing to catch their eyes is the tapestry, which Gorgo declares fit to be clothing for the gods to wear. Praxinoa is impressed most of all by the skill of the weavers, but thereafter does manage to penetrate through to the myth depicted and to forget for the moment her specialized interest as seamstress. The hymn singer in evoking the symbolic importance of the tableau completes the movement from the banausic to the artistic. And though

Gorgo at the end comments first on the singer's voice, she does also show herself moved by the sentiment.

Even the image of the men who so constrain the lives of these housewives undergoes a welcome transformation. Praxinoa's life is controlled jointly by her great useless hulk of a husband, ἀνὴρ τρισκαιδεκάπαχυς (v. 17), and her demanding infant son, who wails to keep her from having one of the few days of freedom allowed to her. Normally, of course, women would not have the freedom of the streets; they must even rely on their husbands to deal with shopkeepers. Only festival gives them escape. At first the dangers of the charging cavalry and Egyptian pickpockets intimidate Praxinoa to the point that she tellingly confesses her fear since childhood of horses and snakes, prime symbols of masculinity. When criticized for her chattering, she clearly relishes the chance finally to talk back to a man. Yet the approach to the palace presents the women with more agreeable specimens of manhood: the deified Soter, the protective Philadelphus, and a friendly gentleman, with whom Praxinoa flirts. Best of all, the Adonia celebrates the fantasy of female power and self-sufficiency. Arsinoe gives the festival of Aphrodite on behalf of Berenice. The singer is a woman and identified by her Argive mother. The bands of charging cavalry on the streets find their counterpart here only in the *putti* which flit like nightingales; no more cranky children here, only the obliging Ganymede. In place of domineering husbands, the sweet and passive Adonis represents the male principle under the control of the powerful goddess of generativity. And Adonis, though Aphrodite's minion and annually destroyed through her, is yet mightier through his triumph over death than paragons of assertive masculinity like Ajax and Agamemnon. Indeed to the extent that it is marriage that oppresses these women, the Adonia, as Detienne [14] suggests, may be taken as a liberation of individuals from the institution. With the woman magically in control, love comes to seem sweet indeed—just the opposite of what these women know in their daily lives. Gorgo ends the poem thinking simultaneously of her acerbic husband and of Ἄδων ἀγαπατέ (v. 149). The whole scene might seem little more than an Aristophanic fantasy, if it were not the real court being described and a real festival. And, indeed, would the vision of a woman's world

[14] M. Detienne, *Les Jardins d'Adonis* (Paris 1972)

have been so very far from reality at the court of Arsinoe? When Theocritus takes on the woman's perspective, as he does to a remarkable extent here as well as in the *Helen* and to a certain extent in the *Heracliscus*, he may be responding in a very direct way to the preferences of the brighter or more powerful half of his royal audience.

It might be noted that the corresponding men's mime, *Id.* 14, pursues for the delectation of Philadelphus a narrow male perspective just as *Id.* 15 does a female for Arsinoe. *Id.* 14 sketches a whole spectrum of male personalities, ranging from the fatuous lover to the staunch soldier to Ptolemy himself at the end, with his own constellation of attributes. Similarly, in *Id.* 15, women can be shrewish or maternal, hysterical or strong. The army and the Adonia each are run by one sex nearly to the exclusion of the other. Most tellingly, the opposite sex in both cases is perceived in extraordinarily simplistic terms. In *Id.* 14, women are all temptresses and faithless; there is nothing to do but get away from them. Comparably, in *Id.* 15, men are all brutes to be tolerated only through the compensatory fantasy of Ganymede, the Cupids, and Adonis. Though many of the *Idylls* reflect Theocritus' obvious delight in taking on such opposite perspectives for their own sake, his genius for doing so convincingly can also have been no small advantage at a court dominated by the queen scarcely less than by the king.[16]

Theocritus' sketch of a housewife's morning reflects a good number of aspects of middle-class life that the Ptolemies would have cause to welcome. Gorgo and Praxinoa show obvious respect and affection for the royal family, accept without resistance the myths of their deification, and find it entirely natural that the palace should be the heart of civic life. The Ptolemies had already mastered the art of mollifying the masses with "bread and circuses"; Philadelphus' Pompe and isolympic festivals provide yet grander instances. In a more modest way the Adonia does provide a measure of festal escape and uplift to palliate the dreariness of urban life. But Theocritus is depicting more than a good show, for the impact of the festival as he depicts it derives ultimately from myths which reflect on the nature of the Ptolemies themselves—not just what

[16] For an intriguing, if finally unpersuasive survey of Callimachus' comparably idiosyncratic handling of the sexes, see K. Ziegler, "Kallimachos und die Frauen," *Die Antike* 12 (1937) 20-42.

they do, but what they are. Involved are the myths of the ἱερὸς γάμος, the king as the source of ὄλβος, the redemptive power of the chaste Ptolemaic Aphrodite, the triumph over death. Theocritus' wry portrayal of how the Ptolemies sell some politically useful myths to the populace also generates a myth of the beloved and divine monarchs which the Ptolemies themselves might find irresistible. What seems on the surface simply a witty and conspiratorial dramatization of how the Ptolemies manage the populace may itself help the official myths come back home to the royal audience which might finally prove most susceptible to them.

The pattern of use and abuse of Homer in *Id.* 15 parallels on a much larger scale the system of literary allusions noted in *Id.* 14. The unfamiliar Syracusan dialect would make Alexandrian audiences particularly sensitive to stylistic nuance.[17] From the very first Theocritus establishes a pronounced tension between the heroic and colloquial styles, as for example when Gorgo comforts the bawling infant (v. 13):

θάρσει, Ζωπυρίων, γλυκερὸν τέκος· οὐ λέγει ἀπφῦν.

The line begins with a startling deflation of Zeus' exhortation to Athena: θάρσει, Τριτογένεια, φίλον τέκος (*Il.* 8.39), while the hypocoristic ἀπφῦν is not found elsewhere in literature and may be roughly equivalent to "dada." [18] The women themselves manipulate tone quite consciously for effect. In reply to a serious question about the crowdedness of the palace, they get only a proverb from an old woman (v. 62): ἐς Τροίαν πειρώμενοι ἦνθον 'Αχαιοί. To this Gorgo replies in kind, and at a suitable level of abstraction (v. 63):

χρησμὼς ἁ πρεσβῦτις ἀπῴχετο θεσπίξασα.

Indeed, the old woman's reply was an oracle in so far as it left the interlocuter knowing no more than when she asked. Praxinoa chimes in similarly (v. 64):

πάντα γυναῖκες ἴσαντι, καὶ ὡς Ζεὺς ἀγάγεθ' Ἥραν.

She aims at irony, for the ἱερὸς γάμος, hidden even from the other gods, is proverbial for the unknowable; her mythological paradigm answers the old woman's in kind. But if θεσπίξασα, "pronouncing

[17] For a compendium of epicisms in the poem, see V. Magnien, "Le Syracusain littéraire et l'idylle XV de Théocrite," *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique de Paris* 21 (1920) 128-31

[18] On the incongruous mixture of Homeric and colloquial diction in *Id.* 15, see Garson, *AJP* 68 (1973) 296.

oracles," is mock-heroic and said in jest, the decidedly epic θεσπέσιος (v. 66), perhaps "stupendous" or "fantastic," crops up almost at once as an example of the faded hyperbole that common speech quite unselfconsciously derives from heroic style. Within the precincts of the palace both women feel the need to assume a more dignified tone. In describing the tapestries, Gorgo uses the Homeric λεπτὰ καὶ ὡς χαρίεντα (v. 79); [19] similarly, Praxinoa addresses her response to πότνι' Ἀθαναία (v. 80). Her reply to the irritated bystander takes on the heroic style in earnest: Bellerophon, too, is Corinthian, no less than are the Syracusans by descent (vv. 91-95). The manner of mythological and genealogical excursus is itself Homeric. Are we meant perhaps to think of another, indeed the most famous exchange between strangers, that between Glaucus and Diomedes in *Il.* 6.119 ff., which similarly leads to the tale of Bellerophon? [20] The frame narrative, then, suggests how heavily Homer figures in common speech, though the usage is either debased or facetious.

The hymn naturally employs the Homeric vocabulary more densely and gracefully. The myths taken only jestingly in what precedes here realize themselves in a most tangible fashion. The palace, as the old woman prophesied, is in its own way a Troy; at least it has its own Helen in the person of Arsinoe (v. 110). Its myths bear direct comparison to those of Troy (vv. 137 ff.). The whole ceremony is a revelation of a ἱερὸς γάμος; if only women understand such mysteries (v. 64), it is a woman who here celebrates them. In this context, Homeric language seems fully appropriate, perhaps deceptively so. The deification of Berenice (with Aphrodite ἀμβροσίαν ἐς στῆθος ἀποστάξασα v. 108) recalls the divine tendance for Patroclus (where Thetis ἀμβροσίην . . . στάξε *Il.* 19.38 f.; cf. 347 f., 353 f.), implying thereby a Homeric precedent for the royal family's extravagant new claims. Homer would be appalled, of course; but Theocritus' application of epic language is bolstered by the whole larger movement which has gradually attuned the poem to the heroic style. The debasement of the Homeric tradition in the popular imagination makes the Ptolemies' reapplication of

[19] So of Circe's loom at *Od.* 10.233 and of garments at *Il.* 22.511, *Od.* 5.231, and 10.544.

[20] For a somewhat extreme interpretation of the extent of Homeric allusion here, see A. Motto and J. Clark, "Idyllic Slumming 'Midst Urban Hordes: The Satiric Epos in Theocritus and Swift," *CB* 47 (1971) 41.

it to themselves seem authentic by comparison. If we first saw the palace from the street, by the end the poem has shifted our point of reference for viewing the Ptolemies and their myths to the canons of heroic poetry—to Agamemnon, Ajax, and Hector. And the comparison is meant to be serious and flattering, I am sure. Ptolemy's standard *Doppelgänger*, Achilles, is tactfully omitted from the catalogue of heroes whom Adonis (and hence the Ptolemies) surpasses through his immortality. The humorous allusions to Homer at the start by no means prevent Theocritus from using the Homeric ethos to validate his final turn to seriousness. For as the mythological poems establish, a certain amount of deflation makes the old heroic world easier to transport to Alexandria; a little lowering of Olympus allows the Ptolemies to climb on more easily. Yet not even the most vehement critic of the ζῆλος Ὁμηρικός could fault the way that Theocritus heroizes the Ptolemies and takes his cues from Homer in *Id.* 15, for he has done so in the most unlikely form imaginable, mime, and used a realistic report on daily life to fill out his mythicization of the monarchs. *Id.* 15 has claims to being a masterpiece in the art of being un-Homerically Homeric, an art practiced here, as so often, before patrons who surely desired that critical editions not be the only memorial of their taste for Homer.

A final question remains concerning the whole cycle of courtly poems: to what extent do they rival the freshness and genius of the incomparably better known and studied bucolic poems? A fair comparison has not previously been possible for want of an appreciation of how the courtly poems function to some extent as a cycle and elucidate one another, even as the pastorals do. The half heroic, half commonplace poetic world constructed around the Ptolemies and their ancestors is not, because of the familiarity of most of the poetic materials here assembled, as distinctive as the pleasance. Yet given the artistic difficulty imposed by the patrons and the proximity of this world to the life of Alexandria, the new heroic age may have equal claims on the reader's imagination. *The Charites* reveals clearly enough the single sensibility that can create both worlds. Though Virgil in the *Eclogues* turned first to the pastorals, how many tutors had he better than Theocritus for his later and larger task of adapting myth to the imperial imagination? Daphnis dead in Mopsus' lament (*Ecl.* 5) is the Daphnis of Theocritus' first *Idyll*. But triumphing over death in

the answering song of Menalcus—and very possibly an analogue for Caesar—he is just as clearly the heir of the immortal Ptolemaic Adonis in *Id.* 15.[21] That Virgil construed the pastoral genre as politically as he did may have resulted from reading all of the *Idylls*, not just the rural mimes.[22] But the question of influence is beyond this study, as is a full-scale comparison of both large systems of poems. I shall end with just a representative example from each, the remarkably similar celebrations of Daphnis (*Id.* 1) and Adonis (*Id.* 15).

Just as *Id.* 15 cuts through all of Alexandria, *Id.* 1 maps out the whole geography of the pleasance from the *locus amoenus* to Daphnis' Promethean confrontation with the gods of this countryside. Both poems progress from daily life to high art and cross-refer the two: where Gorgo and Praxinoa penetrated to the lovely fantasy of Adonis in place of their irksome husbands and to Ganymede in place of their squalling children, Thyrsis' song projects the life of the herdsman as far into the world of heroic myth as gracefully can be done. Priapus, a rude wooden statue in the dramatic setting, comes alive in the song, and the elusive Pan, the object of the goatherd's anxious superstitions in the opening exchange, elicits Daphnis' noblest sentiments in Thyrsis' song. Both poems also contrast art with verse by balancing an *ecphrasis* (cup and tapestries) by a song (concerning Daphnis and Adonis).[23] In both cases unsophisticated observers apply the simple criterion of verisimilitude to plastic art (*Id.* 1.42 and *Id.* 15.83) and end the poems in complimenting the singers on their voices. The dying Daphnis compares himself to Adonis (vv. 109 f.); both young men come to grief through Aphrodite, who tries vainly to resurrect Daphnis, as she does Adonis with annual success.

The two *Idylls* do begin in directly opposite sorts of settings: the lovely scenery of *Id.* 1 lulls the two rustics into affectionate harmony; the meanness of Praxinoa's surroundings has just as

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[21] On the thorny question of allegory in *Ecl.* 5, see H. J. Rose, *The Eclogues of Vergil* (Sather Classical Lectures 16; Berkeley and Los Angeles 1942) 124-38. It should be noted that the songs of Mopsus and Menalcus stand in much the same relation to one another as do the songs concerning Daphnis and Adonis in the *Idylls*.

[22] Cf. J. van Sickle, "Epic and Bucolic (Theocritus, *Id.* vii/Virgil Ecl. i)." *QUCC* 19 (1975) 45-72.

[23] On these contrasts, see U. Ott, *Die Kunst des Gegensatzes in Theokrits Hirtengedichten* (Spudasmata 22; Hildesheim and New York 1969) 85-137.

clearly made her abrasive. But after the initial contrasts of city and country, realism and escapism, the two poems begin to converge in a middle ground. The dusty streets of Alexandria lead to the gardens of Adonis in the palace, while the rustics of *Id.* 1 at once turn from the *locus amoenus* to artifacts which scarcely conceal their urban origins. The goatherd's cup comes by way of international trade from the ferryman at Calydna; it is said to be wooden, but its colorful scenes must derive from the silversmithery of Alexandria (Gow II. 14). The cup itself counterposes a scene of pernicious passion in the city (two youths contending over a maiden) to the innocence of country life (two foxes making mischief around a distracted child). We are reminded, if we had forgotten, that it is city dwellers who idealize the country in precious vignettes of rustic life, such as *Id.* 1 itself, and also find gardens, like the gardens of Adonis, objects of mystery and delight.

Id. 1 begins with a promise of soothing escapism, but almost at once the paradise of music and love betrays us: Pan will not let the herdsmen pipe at noon. The cup is splendidly beautiful, but beneath its ivied rim there is a harsher world of wasting passion, loss, and old age. Thyrsis sings the tragic tale of Daphnis, a figure of renunciation very like Hippolytus, who claims a privileged relationship with nature.[24] Yet the nymphs do not appear to mourn or save him, nor Pan to receive his pipes. He dies cursing nature and bids brambles to bear violets and nature to be turned upside down because of his death. Priapus, who as a statue guards the shepherds' seat, turns out not to be so innocuous in the world depicted in Thyrsis' song. He taunts the dying Daphnis with being like the goatherd who, seeing the nannies frisking, weeps that he was not born a goat. The poem ends with the goatherd cautioning his frisking nannies. It is sexual passion that destroys the pastoral hero. But in the world of Arsinoe's Adonia, despite the harsh realities of the surrounding context, we find only soft and bland kisses. Aphrodite in *Id.* 15 is dignified, loving, almost maternal—in

[24] So much is clear, though the precise details of the story that Theocritus has in mind are notoriously difficult to recover; see Gow II.1 f. and R. M. Ogilvie, "The Song of Thyrsis," *JHS* 82 (1962) 106-10. The puzzle may be insoluble by design, given the unreliability of our informants: Hermes is uninformed and may just be guessing that love is the problem. Priapus supplies the critical information, but how much of this is a prurient reconstruction? Aphrodite is clearly hiding her true emotion (v. 96).

a word, the Ptolemaic Aphrodite. *Id.* 1 shows only her carnal side, her vicious spite, as well as her humiliations at the hands of Diomedes and Anchises. What she brings is destruction, where in *Id.* 15 she is the principle of fertility. And, where Daphnis is a figure of pure suffering, the Adonis song serves just as clearly as an example of myth pulled as far as possible from tragedy, made spuriously bland and decent. Yet the women who are touched by this pleasant and asexual fantasy seem to have started their morning with some rather raw humor (γραιᾶν ἀποτίλματα πηρᾶν v. 19).[25] In moving in opposite directions along the same path from realism to escapism, the two *Idylls* establish the extent to which these oppositions feed on one another, that is, how the sordidness of Praxinoa's daily life shapes a taste that can be satisfied by the Adonia and conversely how the innocence of the pleasance only clarifies the view from there out onto the realities of sexuality and death. As often, Theocritus uses the distinction between urban and rustic to explore the elusive contrast between those who observe reality and those who create their own poetically (see above, p. 19). Where Theocritus' urban mimes conspicuously surpass Herodas' is through their inclusion of nobler and happier topics; where the pastoral *Idylls* surpass most of their imitators is in the tendency of the country world to become a bit too pungent for simple contentment. The dialectics of Theocritus' style are equally rich in both *Idylls*, as I suspect they are in the larger groups which they represent. And with a poet like Theocritus, who works so clearly through oppositions, we must surely be cautious about reading one side of the corpus without reference to the other. Even the pastorals point their signs to the city, and the courtly poems look at political realities with the protective simplifications of pastoral innocence.

The final reference point for our comparison, as always with the Alexandrians, must be Homer, whom we have earlier seen in the uncharacteristic position of attending piously to the apotheosis of Queen Berenice and to cultic myths such as the monumental epics conspicuously chose not to relate. *Id.* 1 presents a no less systematic program of reversal: the *ecphrasis* of the Shield of Achilles, deliberately miniaturized in the figure of the cup, works toward preciosity and is juxtaposed and in a sense put into competition with a rustic

[25] If the hair is not animal but human and if πήρα has the same sense as *bulga* in Lucil. 73.623 Marx. See Gow II. 272.

song.[36] Where an Iliadic motif has been cut down to size, rustic song now takes on the challenge of being heroic and expansive. The Homeric paradigm and basic epic presumption of the poet who brings immortalizing κλέος is here essentially inverted. Thyrsis is urged to sing at this moment not because of the poet's power over time, but because of his vulnerability to it: he cannot take his song εἰς 'Αίδαν γε τὸν ἐκλελάθοντα (v. 63). Daphnis himself, for all of his expansive claims on nature, makes no claims to enduring memory among the guild of pipe-players which he founds. In fact, he does not pass down his pipes to establish a line of succession such as might reach to Thyrsis, but returns them to Pan. He foresees for himself only the immortality of being an ἄλγος Ἔρωτι (v. 103) even in Hades. Yet the words which Theocritus uses for his inversion of the standard conventions of κλέος are themselves impeccably Homeric: in their pique, the Muses cause Thamyris to forget (ἐκλέλαθον *Il.* 2.600) his singing in the single passage in Homer where the patron deities of music forbid it, as Pan has done earlier in *Id.* 1. Both *Idylls* focus their inversions of the conventions of heroic poetry on the suggestion, finally, of a new, less imposing heroism, be it that of Daphnis (in contrast to Diomedes, Anchises, or, implicitly, Prometheus and Hippolytus) or Adonis (as surpassing Agamemnon, Ajax, *et al.*). Yet for all of the similarity of the devices which confer heroic status on them, Daphnis and Adonis are antithetical sorts of figures. We see both at the boundary of the human and divine world. Daphnis cannot pass it, and that is the essence of his tragedy; even Aphrodite cannot save him. He "goes to the stream" and will not return; but the Adonis to be borne to the waves on the morrow will return.[37] Aphrodite, we recall, has saved Berenice (*Id.* 17.48), who, with Soter, has joined the ranks of the gods. Theocritus' evocation of tragedy in the pastoral mode [38] centers, then, on the impermeability of that mortal boundary, even for those greatly favored by nature; Ptolemaic myth assumes precisely the opposite.

In promulgating such antithetical myths, these two *Idylls* present no less contrary visions of the purposes of art. *Id.* 1 is an

[36] The verbal echoes of *Iliad* 18 are dense and unmistakable. See Ott's tabulation, pp. 100 f.

[37] See C. Segal, "Death by Water: A Narrative Pattern in Theocritus (Idylls 1, 13, 22, 23)," *Hermes* 102 (1974) 20-38.

[38] On which, see the fine analysis of A. Parry, "Landscape in Greek Poetry," *YCS* 15 (1957) 11-13.

exercise in the possibilities of art for itself. As the opening exchange establishes, poetry and piping exist only to be ranked and rewarded. When the goatherd pays for Thyrsis' song with a cup, he expresses a purely aesthetic judgment. The real movement of the poem is in the comparison of artifact to artifact, of one artistic medium to another (e.g. singing and piping), with due attention to the senses of touch, smell, and taste as well. Can it be accidental that we end on that favored image of Callimachean aestheticism, the cicada (v. 148)? But the goatherd's other good wishes—for honey, the honeycomb, sweet figs, and the goat to milk—mix strangely with the image of the dew-eating creature of air and spirit. They remind us of the system of exchange—that is, of patronage—which binds together this world of art. When in *Id.* 15 the people of Alexandria bring offerings to Arsinoe's palace along with the tributes of distant cities, that exchange functions more broadly in integrating the life of the society. The artists who make the tapestries, the tableaux, and the hymns which the people enjoy in exchange for their offerings are the mediators between sovereign and society. This art manifestly lacks the grandeur of the great classics of earlier centuries; but, as a central channel of communication between king and country, art plays a role within the society at large little diminished from that earlier period. The Adonia, then, shows art opening out to the life of the streets and generating myths to make that life bearable, as well as to keep Ptolemy on his throne. Now, this art is not quite Theocritus' art. He is, to be sure, standing back from the workings of Ptolemaic public relations as the witty and detached observer, the writer of mime. The Argive woman's daughter who sings of Adonis must be the least of his colleagues. Yet like the distinguished Thyrsis she is asked to sing on the strength of past performances (*Id.* 15.97 f.; cf. *Id.* 1.19 f. and 23 f.). What she sings draws the *Idyll* beyond the simple and traditional form of mime.[29] And though she and Theocritus face in opposite directions, she to the popular audience and he to the princes, both are standing midway between the two groups and interpreting the other side; they celebrate the same myths. Surely we are not to think that Theocritus put less of himself into her than he did into Thyrsis.

[29] See the appreciation of it by Matthew Arnold in "Pagan and Mediaeval Religious Sentiment," in *Essays in Criticism*, ser. 1 (London 1865; reprinted 1937) 200-10.

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